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THE *Helms (R)*
GREAT DUTY
Of Frequenting the
Christian Sacrifice,
And the NATURE of the
PREPARATION Required:
WITH
Suitable DEVOTIONS.
Partly Collected from the Ancient
LITURGIES.

For as often as ye eat this Bread and drink this Cup, ye do shew the Lord's Death till he come, 1 Cor. xi. 26. We have an Altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the Tabernacle, Heb. xiii. 10.

The Fourth Edition.
To which is prefixed
An Exercise upon CONFIRMATION.

L O N D O N :
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AMONG the many worthy Attempts that have been made to retrieve the Piety and Devotion of the Primitive Times, the promoting frequent Communion has had no inconsiderable Influence; and as this Antient Practice recovers its true Perfection, we may reasonably expect, that the wonderful Effects of it will appear in the Lives and Conversation of Christians.

The Duty it self seems at present much better understood than it was formerly, when many very unwary Discourses upon the Subject rather discouraged than excited Men to the performance of it. The Preparation was look'd upon as so difficult and burdensome, and so great a Perfection of Piety required in the Receivers, that all sincere Beginners in Religion were inclined to think, that the sacred Institution no ways related to them;

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and the Men of Business, tho' otherwise very serious, were of the Opinion, that so much more Retirement was necessary than they could spare, that not being able to prepare themselves, according to such Schemes, they altogether laid aside the Duty, and reserved the Holy Communion for their Viaticum in their last Hours; which, tho' an admirable means to settle and secure the Pardon and Peace of such penitent Souls as have frequented the Altar in the time of their Health and Vigour; yet, I am afraid, will but little avail those who have wilfully neglected it all along in Life.

Now if Christians did but seriously consider, that the best Preparation for Celebrating the Holy Mysteries consisted in a constant Care to govern their Lives by the Precepts of the Gospel; and that it was sufficient if they approached the Lord's Table with honest and devout Minds, heartily and sincerely resolving to amend their Lives,

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and truly willing and desirous to use all means to become better; It is impossible, I say, if Men's Minds were possessed with this right Notion of the matter, and that they really designed to be true to their Christian Professions, but that they should embrace all Opportunities of receiving the Holy Sacrament, and lament every reasonable Cause of their absence as a great Misfortune, because it is the best means to enable them to discharge their Duty. And indeed the Religion we live by, is the Religion we must receive by; tho' the Method many Men take upon these Occasions tempt one to believe, that they think there is a great difference between them.

For my part, I could never discover any Duty, supposing one instructed in the Nature of this holy Action, that a Man was obliged to, before receiving the holy Communion, that was not his Duty some time or other, tho' he forbore Communicating. For the holy

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Sacrament does not so much oblige us to new Duties, as enable us to make good those Obligations, which the Profession of Christianity has already laid upon us.

They that are acquainted with Ecclesiastical History, know very well, that the Eucharist in the purest Ages of the Church, made a part of their daily Publick Service; and when the Devotion of Christians began to decline, they yet always upon the Lord's Day celebrated the Christian Sacrifice. Our Second Service at the Altar seems defective without a conformable Practice to Antiquity in this point; and the Holy Exercises of the Lord's Day appear to want their due Perfection without these Eucharistical Devotions. To this purpose our Church has encouraged a constant weekly Communion, by permitting
it to be celebrated where
Rubrick after three or four Persons are
Commun. ready and willing to Communicate;
as being assured by our Saviour, that
where two or three are gathered to-
gether

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gether in his Name, there he is himself in the midst of them. *And if the Parochial Minister should begin with such a small Number, it is likely they would quickly increase; at least it will demonstrate his own Zeal to shew forth the Lord's Death, and may bring a Blessing upon his Parish, as well as upon the other Labours of his Holy Function.*

In Order to quicken the establishing of this Primitive Devotion, I cannot forbear suggesting an Observation made by several of the Reverend Clergy, who have been zealous in this Matter, viz. That where Communion have been frequent, the Number of the Communicants have sensibly increased; which, I think, ought to be no small Encouragement to have the Holy Mysteries celebrated in all Parish Churches every Lord's Day; because this shews a great Disposition in the Laity to be brought to a Sense of their Duty, and consequently must animate

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the Zeal of their Pastors to give them such frequent Opportunities of commemorating the Death and Passion of our Blessed Saviour.

To this Holy End and Purpose I have endeavour'd by proper Arguments to press the Duty of frequent Communion upon the Consciences of Men; for all those Motives that persuade us to communicate at all, ought to prevail upon us to do it often; and it appears to me very plain, that no sincere Christian, not otherwise lawfully hinder'd, can justify going out of the Church when the Christian Sacrifice is celebrated; nor is there any Pretence or Excuse sufficiently valid for a Man that is in earnest with Religion, to turn his Back upon the Holy Table, when the heavenly Banquet is there prepared.

I have no Design to push those forward that have pitched their Tents in the Quarters of the Enemy; because being under the Power of evil Habits, their
receiving

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receiving, as well as their praying, must aggravate their Crimes, and increase their Condemnation; they cannot partake of the Table of the Lord, and live and blaspheme as if they partook of the Table of Devils. And 'tis in vain to persuade such People to be converted, in order to make themselves fit to receive often, because this Motive will make little or no Impression upon those that are so destitute of Faith and the Love of God. But I hope all such honest Minds and candid Readers, who have a just Concern for the Welfare of their Souls, will consider so seriously the weight of those Answers that are given to the most plausible Objections against frequent Communion, as to reform this Neglect if they have been hitherto Guilty.

I have moreover set in its true Light the great Care our Holy Mother, the Church of England, has taken to prevent the Profanation of the Lord's Supper; and did our own

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Members govern themselves more exactly, according to such admirable Rules, or did those who differ from us more thoro'ly weigh the Excellency of them, we should bear no more of those Objections they are wont to make against our Discipline in this Point.

I have particularly taken Care to shew that this Christian Institution was ordained not only to put us in Mind of those great Blessings which our Saviour purchased for us by his Death; for what Man, that reflects upon his Christianity, can easily forget them? But that it was also established as a sacred Rite to supplicate God the Father by the Merits of our Saviour's Passion, representing to him the Symbols of his Body and Blood, that thereby he may become favourable and propitious to us. This Sense of it is agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, they were understood by those who lived nearest to the Times of the Apostles; and has been evidently proved so by the Learned, Judicious, and Pious Mr. Mede. I I

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I must freely confess, that the Sum and Substance of the following Treatise was printed in a Catechetical Form in the Chapter of the Vigils in The Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England; but in great deference to the concurring Judgment of some worthy Divines and Lay-Men of my Acquaintance, it now appears in another Dress, with some enlargements, more easily to be purchased by all sorts of People. They were so indulgent to the Composition which they desired, as to think it might be serviceable to the Interest of Religion; an Argument, which I am willing to own, I was not able to resist; for I hope I shall be always ready to sustain the shock of the severest worldly Censure, when the Providence of God offers me a probable Opportunity of doing the least Good.

To make it more effectual to that End, I have added upon this Occasion the Devotional part, which in some measure owes its Original to the Anti-

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ent Liturgies of the Christian Church, which I have carefully perus'd, and have transplanted many a pious Thought and warm Expression from those Sources into this private Composure.

I am very sensible this Subject has exercised the Pens of many learned and devout Persons; and tho' I think we abound too much with Discourses upon the Argument of Preparation, wherein the Substance of Practical Divinity is introduced, as if it was only necessary at such times; yet I am of the Opinion we cannot exceed in multiplying Books upon the Devotional Part; the Tempers and Apprehensions of Men being so different, that what does not affect one, may touch another; and so that Substantial Piety and Devotion are improving, too many Instruments cannot be employed in advancing them.

August 15,
1076.

Rob. Nelson.

An

*An EXERCISE Explaining the
Nature of CONFIRMA-
TION: Formerly printed
for the use of the CHARITY
SCHOOLS.*

Q. **W**HAT is Confirmation?

A. A solemn Rite instituted by the Apostles, wherein the *Bishop*, by laying on of Hands, and by fervent Prayer and Authoritative Benediction conveys to such Persons, who in the Presence of God and the Congregation, sincerely renew their Baptismal Vow, a farther degree of God's Grace and Holy Spirit.

Q. *What is the End and Design of Confirmation?*

A. That baptised Christians should by a deliberate Choice take upon themselves that Vow and Promise which was made in their Names by their Godfathers and Godmothers, when they were admitted Members of
Christ

Christ's Church; so that the confirmed Person expressly consents to the baptismal Covenant, and before God and many Witnesses engages to perform his part of it.

Q. At what Age is Confirmation to be administred?

A. The Church of *England* has not determin'd any certain Age, but requires it to be done only to such, as are come to a *competent Age*; which implies, that none should be admitted, till they understand the Nature of the baptismal Vow, which they then renew, and till they are capable of making a prudent and firm Resolution of observing it.

Q. What Custom was there among the Jews, which bore any Resemblance with Confirmation?

A. The Jews were wont to bring their Children before the

Buxt. Syna.
Jud. cap. vii.

Congregation at thirteen Years old, when they had

learned the Law and the explication thereof, and their daily Prayers; whereupon they were declared *Sons of the Precept*, and henceforth they were to answer for their own Sins, for which before,

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before the Fathers, and not the Children, had been responsible; and the Rite ended with Prayers and Praises.

Q. What has the Church of England declared concerning Confirmation?

A. That it has been a solemn ancient and laudable Custom, continued from the Apostles Time, that all Bishops should lay their Hands upon Children baptised and instructed in the Catechism of Christian Religion, praying over them and blessing them.

Can. lx.

Q. How does it appear that this Rite was of Apostolical Usage?

A. We have the Scripture it self for the Evidence of the Fact; for when the Men of *Samaria* had been converted and baptised, and had received

Act. viii.

the Word of God, the Apostles *St. Peter* and *St. John*, were sent to confirm those new Converts, to lay their hands upon them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. And the

Disciples at *Ephesus*, after they had been baptised in the Name of *Jesus*, were confirmed by *St. Paul*, who laid his Hands upon them,

Act. xix, 5, 6.

them, and then they received the Holy Ghost. And farther, the same Apostle mentions as a Fundamental, not only the Doctrine of Baptism,

Heb. vi. 2.

but the *laying on of hands*, by which ancient and modern Interpreters understand Confirmation; which appeared so plain to Calvin himself, that 'twas his Opinion, *that this one Place*

In loc.

shews evidently that Confirmation was instituted by the Apostles.

Q. How does it appear that Confirmation was not confined to the Apostolical Age?

A. Because this solemn Rite is highly useful and beneficial to the spiritual wants of Christians in all Ages; who stand in need of the influences of God's Holy Spirit to the great purpose of Sanctification; and was as such accordingly practised by them in all the succeeding Ages of the Church, as appears by the Testimony of *Fathers and Councils*, who in this matter speak as witnesses of a Catholick Custom.

Q. Give me some Testimonies of this practice.

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A. Tertullian, who flourished about fourscore Years after *St. John*, and who is very careful in relating the practice of the Primitive Church, tells us, *that after Baptism succeeds laying on of hands, by prayer, calling for and inviting the Holy Spirit.* And *St. Cyprian*, who flourished about sixty Years after *Tertullian*, hath this remark upon the History of the Samaritan Converts; the same Thing,

De Bap. c. 8.

says he, *is practised among* Epist. 73.

us, that they who are baptised in the Church, are presented to the Governours of it, the Bishops, that by our Prayers and Imposition of Hands they may obtain the Holy Ghost, and be perfected with the Seal of Christ: which is by Confirmation to attain the highest Order of Christians. *St. Jerome* speaks full to the point;

If you ask, says he, where Dial adv.
it is written, it is written Lucif.

in the Acts of the Apostles; but if there were no Authority of Scripture for it, yet the Consent of all the World in this particular, is instead of a Command.

Q What.

Q. What are the effects of Confirmation?

A. In the Primitive Church these Effects were *extraordinary Gifts*, as best fitted to the Infant State of the Church, but upon the Settlement of it, the Holy Spirit guides it by secret and invisible communications, which those receive who are qualified to partake of them in this regular and ministerial way; and they are those ordinary Helps and Assistances, which are necessary for the performing the conditions of our Salvation which we cannot work out without the Influences of God's Holy Spirit.

Q. Who is the proper Minister of Confirmation?

A. The Administration of this Rite was devolved by the Apostles to their Successors the Bishops of the Catholic Church; for tho' *Philip*

Act. viii. 14,
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lip the Deacon had liberty both to preach and Baptise, yet the Apostles only had the Power to Confirm, as is plain by the History of the *Samaritan* Converts.

And therefore this Rite is appropriated.

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ted to the Bishops, the Governours of the Church in all the Primitive Records of Christianity.

Q. What Ceremony is used in Confirmation?

A. The laying on of the Hand of the Bishop upon the Head of the Person to be confirmed; a very antient Ceremony in giving of Blessings practised by the *Jews*, and made use of by our Saviour himself, and adopted by the Apostles with Prayer for communicating the Holy Spirit in Confirmation; and which gave Name to the whole Office which is called *the laying on of Hands*.

Mat. xix. 13.

Act. viii. 17.

Heb. vi. 2.

Q. What Qualifications are necessary for the Candidates of this holy Ordinance?

A. Those who are brought to be confirmed, ought to be thorowly instructed in the Nature of their baptismal Vow which they then renew, and of that Obligation they lie under to perform it. They ought to be acquainted with the meaning of this holy Rite, and whose Office it is to administer it. They ought to have a competent degree

degree of Knowledge in those Christian Duties that relate to God, their Neighbour and themselves. And in order to these ends it is adviseable, that they should frequently read over the Confirmation Office.

Q. What particular Preparation is necessary before Confirmation?

A. The Persons to be confirmed ought to examine themselves concerning those Sins of Omission or Commission they have been guilty of, in Thought, Word, and Deed; and must express their hearty Sorrow and Repentance for them; and earnestly beg God's Pardon and Forgiveness; to which they must add serious Resolutions of living answerable to their Christian Profession. And that their Prayers and holy Purposes may be effectual, they must join Fasting to them, that they may be the better disposed to receive the Influences of God's Holy Spirit.

Q. Since you mention the Necessity of making Serious Resolutions of living answerable to the Christian Profession when you receive Confirmation; pray what do you resolve in Relation to those
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Enemies that oppose your Salvation, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh?

A. I resolve, by the Grace of God, to be always upon the watch against those various Contrivances they form to endanger my Salvation; I resolve to use all fit and proper means to defeat their Designs; and particularly to fortify those weak Places of my Mind, which my Temper or Circumstances of Life render most exposed to Danger.

Q. *What do you resolve in relation to the Devil?*

A. I resolve, by God's Assistance, never to give my consent to those wicked Thoughts which he may throw into my Mind; nor to comply with those Temptations whereby he solicites me to sin; neither will I make use of those ways of consulting him which ungodly Men have taken. And I farther resolve to avoid all Pride, Malice and Envy, all Treachery, Lying, Revenge and Cruelty, which are most properly the Works of the Devil.

Q. *What do you resolve in relation to the World?*

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A. I resolve by the help of God, not to do any thing unlawful in order to procure Honour, Riches and Pleasure; neither will I set my Affections immoderately upon any lawful Enjoyment. I resolve to contradict the evil Maxims and Customs, to avoid the bad company of a vain and wicked World; and to forego all worldly Comforts and Possessions, all my natural Relations and my own life, whenever they stand in competition with my Duty.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to the Flesh?

A. I resolve, by God's help, to resist the unlawful desires of my own corrupt Nature; to suppress all lascivious and wanton Thoughts, to avoid all filthy and obscene Discourse, and never to gratifie my fleshly Appetites but with Temperance and Sobriety, and only in such a manner as is allowed by the Law of God. And in order to this Purpose, I will shun Sloath and Idleness, which are common Incentives to our carnal Minds.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to your Faith?

A. I

A. I resolve to believe the Being of a God, which is evident from his making and preserving all Things. I resolve to believe that in this one glorious Godhead, there are three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; that the second Person in the blessed Trinity, God the Son, took upon him Human Nature, was born of a Virgin, and died upon a Cross as a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World; that he rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into Heaven, and sitteth on the right Hand of God, and that he will come again to judge the quick and the dead. That this *Jesus* planted a Church while he was upon Earth, and committed the Care of it to his Apostles, with a Power to ordain others to succeed them in their Office. That the Holy Ghost bestowed miraculous Gifts upon the Apostles to fit them to convert the World, and to bring all Mankind into the Christian Church, in which forgiveness of Sins, and eternal Life after the Resurrection of the Body, are always to be obtained.

Q. Why

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Of Confirmation.

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Q. Why

Q. Why do you resolve to believe thus?

A. Because these and all other points of my Creed are revealed in the Holy Scriptures by God himself, who is infinite Truth and cannot, who is infinite Love and will not deceive me,

Q. What do you resolve in relation to your Practice?

A. I resolve by the Help of Divine Grace to observe all those Precepts which relate to God, my Neighbour, and my self.

Q. What do you resolve in Relation to God?

A. I resolve to pay my Obedience to him in a due and devout Attendance on Prayers both in publick and private, and on the Holy Sacrament. I resolve to own his Bounty in all the good Things I receive, and to submit patiently to his Wisdom in all the Afflictions I suffer. I resolve to reverence his Holy Name, never to use it lightly, nor to prophane it by customary Swearing, much less by false and faithless Oaths. I resolve to reverence his Holy Word and his Worship, and his Day particularly set a-

part

part for it, and all Things and Persons devoted to him and commissioned by him.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to your Neighbour?

A. I resolve by the Grace of God to be just in all my Dealings, never to deprive him of his Right by Fraud or Force; to be sincere in my Expressions and to be true to my Promises. I resolve to relieve his Necessities according to my Ability, and to be candid in interpreting his Words and Actions; never to slander him by false Reports or unnecessarily to publish his Faults by evil speaking. I resolve to be meek and patient under all Provocations, and to be ready to forgive all Affronts and Injuries; and to study to promote Peace among all Men. I resolve to love, reverence and obey my natural Parents, and to perform the several Duties I owe to all my Governors in Church and State.

Q. What do you resolve in relation to your self?

A. I resolve by the Grace of God, to humble my self under a just sense of my own Faults and Defects not to

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be puffed up with a vain Conceit of my self, or with a Contempt of others. I resolve to be chaste in all my Thoughts, Words and Actions; and to avoid every Thing that may in the least have a Tendency to Uncleaness; to be temperate in the use of Meats, Drinks, and all other Enjoyments, and to fly from all Temptations to Drunkenness. I resolve to deny my self, to keep my Body under by fasting, and to mortifie my Affections to the things of this World; and to be ready to part with any of the Conveniences of Life rather than forsake the Ways of Truth and Righteousness.

Q. From whence appears the Necessity of being sincere in these Resolutions?

A. Because God who knows our Hearts, will reject our pretended dedication of our selves to his Service, if we engage only out of Custom, and in Compliance with the Fashion of the World; and consequently will withhold his Grace from us, since we render our selves unworthy of the Influences of it, by never really designing what we openly profess.

Q. What

Q. What are the great Advantages of Confirmation?

A. It is a new Engagement to a Christian Life; and is a lasting Admonition and Check not to dishonour or desert my Christian Profession: It tends to preserve the Unity of the Church, by making Men sensible, that they are obliged to communicate with such Ecclesiastical Superiors, who are endowed with all those Powers that were left by the Apostles to their Successors. And it is moreover a Testimony of God's Favour and Goodness to those that receive it.

Q. How is it a Testimony of God's Favour and Goodness to those that receive it?

A. Because his lawful Minister declares that God accepts their Proficiency, and advances them into the highest Rank of the Faithful, by giving them a Title to approach the Holy Table. And because God vouchsafes thereby to communicate supernatural Strength to encounter their spiritual Enemies, and enables them to perform what they undertake.

Q. What Care has the Church of

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England shewn for the effectual Administration of Confirmation?

A. Such is the wise Discipline of our Holy Mother, that both by her *Rubrics* and *Canons* she trains us up by gradual steps for a worthy partaking of this holy Rite; for in our Baptism she requires Sureties that shall engage for us, and give Security for our Christian Education in the Communion of the Church; they being oblig'd not only

*Exhor. at the
end of Pub.
Bapt.*

to instruct us in all necessary Points of Faith and Practice, but to take care, that when we are fit, we be brought to the Bishop for Confirmation.

Q. What farther care has the Church express'd in this particular?

A. The Parish Priest or Curate is particularly enjoined to *Catechise, to Instruct, and Examine the Youth and the common People in the Principles of the Christian Religion, according to the Church Catechism.* And the Church farther requires that none be presented as Candidates, till they

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they can give an account and reason of their Faith, of which the Minister who presents them is to be Judge, and none are even then to be confirmed, except the Bishop approves of them. And to strike a greater awe in the Candidates, they are solemnly charged to answer as in the Presence of God and the whole Congregation.

Q. Why is a Godfather or Godmother required for the Person to be confirmed Rub. at the end of Catech.

A As a Voucher of the Party's Sincerity, and to be a continual Monitor to them to perform their Vow, as well as a Witness of their making the same.

Q. How has the Church endeavour'd to prevent any neglect in those that are intrusted with the administration of Confirmation?

A. She wills and ordains that every Bishop or his Suffragan in his usual Triennial Visitation, should perform in his own Person this Rite and Usage; but if thro' any Infirmary he is hindred from making his Triennial Visitation, he is charged not to omit it the follow-

ing Year as soon as conveniently may be.

Q. What is the Minister of the Parish obliged to, when the Bishop giveth notice of a Confirmation?

A. The Minister of every Parish is obliged to bring or send in Writing, with his hand subscribed thereunto, the Names of all such Persons within his Parish, as he shall think fit to be presented to the Bishop to be confirmed.

Q. Ought Confirmation to be received more than once?

A. It is not to be repeated, because this solemn renewal of our baptismal Vow is sufficient by being once performed, and for farther Supplies of Grace we have hereby a Title to receive the Holy Communion.

A Prayer

*A Prayer before Confirmation,
to be used by those that are
preparing for it.*

MOST merciful God, by whose gracious Providence I was born of Christian Parents, and early dedicated to thee in holy Baptism; make me thorowly sensible, I beseech thee, of thy infinite Goodness in bestowing upon me the blessed Privileges of being made a Member of thy Church, a Child of God, and an Inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Grant, O Lord, that by the Assistance of thy Grace, I may carefully and zealously perform all those Conditions, upon which thou art pleased to vouchsafe to me such inestimable Benefits: That I may constantly resist the Devil, and all those Temptations by which he seeks to destroy me. That I may renounce all covetous Desires of Honour, Riches and Pleasure, and all those evil Customs and Maxims of the World, which alienate Mens Minds from the Love of God; that I may

mortifie the inordinate Appetites of my own corrupt Nature, of my own carnal Mind; that I may believe all thy holy Revelations, and keep thy blessed Will and Commandments all the Days of my Life.

And now, O Lord, that I am about to renew the solemn Vow of my Baptism, and publickly in thy Presence to ratifie all those things I then promised by my Sureties; I humbly beseech thee to enlighten my Mind with the Knowledge and Understanding of that solemn Engagement I then made, and am now about to confirm; influence my Will and all the Faculties of my Soul heartily and sincerely to perform it. Let not the many and grievous sins that I have committed, deprive me of those assistances of thy Holy Spirit, which I now expect to receive; but let my true Repentance, and the precious Blood of my Saviour wash away all my past Sins, and grant that I may be enabled to mortifie and subdue them for the time to come. And forasmuch as without thee, I am not able to please thee, pour thy Holy Spirit into my Heart, that by his holy
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Inspiration I may think those Things which are good, and by his merciful Guidance may perform the same, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord, in whose blessed Name and Words I continue to pray, saying,

Our Father, &c.

A Prayer after Confirmation, which may be said while others are confirming, and may be added to the Evening Prayer of the Party confirmed.

Blessed and praised be thy Holy Name, O Lord, for those fresh Supplies of Grace which thou hast been pleased to communicate to me.

Blessed be thy Name for those comfortable Assurances thou hast given me of thy Favour and Goodness towards me. Blessed be thy Name for that Privilege thou hast now bestowed upon me of approaching thy holy Table, and of strengthening and refreshing my Soul by the Body and Blood of Christ.

Encrease in me, O Lord, more and more the Gifts of thy Holy Spirit, that

I may be wise for Eternity, and make it the chief Business of my Life to please thee in all my Actions; that I may love and fear thee above all things; that I may be just and righteous in all my Dealings, and ready to communicate to the Necessities of others; that I may keep a constant watch over my self, so as not to exceed the Bounds of Temperance and Sobriety.

Grant, O Lord, that my corrupt Nature may be daily renewed and purified by thy Holy Spirit, that no Danger or Persecution may affright me from my Duty; that no Pleasure may make me careless and negligent in the Performance of it; and that under Afflictions most grievous to Flesh and Blood, I may be entirely resigned, and submit to thy holy Will and Pleasure. Let thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, so guide and govern me thro' the whole course of my short Life in this World, that I may not fail to obtain eternal Life in the World to come, thro' *Jesus Christ* our Lord. *Amen.*

T H E

THE
GREAT DUTY
Of Frequenting the
Christian Sacrifice.

IT is no wonder that Men, who are not serious in the *Business* of Religion, and who frequent the Church only in compliance with the Fashion of the World, and in Obedience to an establish'd Custom, should neglect one of the greatest Advantages of the Christian Life, I mean the frequent receiving the *Holy Sacrament of Christ's Body and Blood*: But that Christians, otherwise very devout and not lawfully hindred, who have the Fear of God before their Eyes, and who aim at pleasing Him in all their Actions, should ever turn their Backs
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24 *The DUTY of Frequenting*

upon his *Holy Table*, and when invited to *commemorate* the meritorious *Sacrifice* of the *Death* of *Christ*, should refuse to give such an easie Instance of a thankful Heart, is really matter of Astonishment; because they do thereby neglect the most effectual means of growing in Grace, and overlook the best Method of attaining what they most sincerely purpose and desire.

I am apt indeed to think that this their bad Conduct chiefly proceeds from the want of a true Sense of their Duty in this particular. Their great Desire to perform an acceptable Sacrifice to God, fills their Minds with lively apprehensions of the great Danger of being unworthy Communicants; so that they do not give themselves leisure to attend to those Considerations that enforce the Necessity of the Duty; and therefore do not suffer their Thoughts to dwell upon the great hazard they run, in neglecting to execute a plain Command of our Blessed Saviour; which is more dangerous to their Salvation than performing it after an imperfect manner. The Duty therefore being indispensable, the just Consequence

quence we should draw from the Danger of unworthy Receiving, should be the Necessity of exciting our selves to great Care and Diligence in preparing our selves for the due discharge of it; but never to delude our selves by false Reasons into such a neglect as will certainly increase our Guilt, and add to our Punishment.

As for those who never partake of the Holy Communion during their whole Lives, for fear lest their Sins should receive a fresh Aggravation by being committed after so solemn an Obligation to be Religious! it is plain they run into a very great Error. For one main reason why Sin becomes more heinous after repeated Obligations to the contrary, is, because it is committed with greater Deliberation, and against clearer Conviction: When therefore a Man, who believes Religion, and understands the Obligations it lays upon him, omits this Duty for no other reason, but that he may sin, as he thinks, with less danger, his Sins are then equally deliberate, and against equally clear Conviction; and he moreover adds to them a contemptuous neglect
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of one of the best Means of becoming better.

In order therefore to make this short Discourse more useful upon so important a Subject, I shall reduce it to the following Method.

First, I shall inquire into those Obligations that lie upon all Christians to receive the holy Communion, and to frequent the Christian Sacrifice.

Secondly, I shall shew what Preparation is necessary to perform this Duty after an acceptable manner.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to answer some Objections against frequent Communion.

Fourthly, I shall lay before you the great advantages of frequent Communion.

Fifthly, I shall shew the particular Care the Church of England has taken to prevent the Profanation of the Lord's Supper.

Sixthly, I shall add some Directions as to the manner of performing it, with suitable Devotions on such Occasions.

First, I shall enquire into those Obligations that lie upon all Christians to receive the holy Communion, and to frequent the Christian Sacrifice.

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The *first* Argument for the performance of this Christian Duty arises from the *positive Command* of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the Authour of our Religion. It is from this Anointed of the Lord that we are denominated Christians, which implies a firm Belief of those Doctrines which he has revealed, and a stedfast purpose of Mind to perform those Precepts which he has commanded: We moreover solemnly promised in our Vow of Baptism, to govern all our Actions by the Rule of his holy Gospel. Therefore to persist in the neglect of a plain Law of our Lord and Master, sufficiently made known to us, is no ways consistent with our Engagement, nor with that Character we profess, of being his Disciples, Besides, our Obedience in this particular pays a peculiar regard to his Authority; for this Duty being a positive Injunction, receives all its Force from his Right to command. Now that our Saviour has made it the Duty of all Christians to frequent this *commemorative Sacrifice*, is plain from the History of its Institution, in the close of which our Saviour adds
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this positive Injunction, *Do this in remembrance of me*: By St. Luk. 22. 19. which, as the holy Apostles were obliged to do to others as our Saviour had done to them, viz. to bless, break, and give the Bread to all that joyned with them in these holy Services; so were all Christians hereby engaged to receive from them and their Successors, these Symbols of Christ's Body and Blood. By this Precept therefore the Communion of Christ's Body and Blood, as represented by Bread and Wine in the Holy Sacrament is made the standing Memorial of his Death and Sufferings in all Christian Assemblies to the end of the World. St. Paul, who received from the Lord himself what he taught concerning this holy Institution, repeats the same Command, 1 Cor. 11. 24. *This do in remembrance of me*. And if we consider the Circumstances of this Command, it will still have a greater influence upon us; for it was given by our best Friend, and greatest Benefactor when he was about to lay down his Life for our sakes. They are as it were his dying Words

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to all his sincere Disciples and Followers; and therefore ought to be received with the greatest Respect and Deference imaginable. In pursuance of this Precept, we find the first Christians did not continue more stedfastly in the *Apostles Doctrine*, than they communicated in *Prayer and breaking of Bread*. It be- Acts 2 24.

ing well known, that the Publick Worship, the *Synaxis* of the ancient Christians, consisted of these three parts, Of *Hearing God's Word*, of *Prayers*, and of *Commemorating of Christ in the Eucharist*.

The *second* Argument for the Performance of this Christian Duty arises from the *Nature* of the Duty it self. It is a piece of Worship appropriated to the Christian Religion, by which in a peculiar manner we profess our selves Followers of the Blessed Jesus. The *Heathens* and *Mahometans* offer up Prayers and Praises to God; and by the Light of Nature apply themselves to infinite Power for the relief of their Necessities, and return their Thanks to infinite Goodness, as the Source from whence they receive all their Blessings.

Blessings. The *Jews*, by slaying of Beasts, and by burning Incense, invoked God, and praised and blessed him for those Mercies of which they partook. But Christians only set before God Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, *as Figures or Images of the precious Blood of Christ shed for us, and of his precious Body*, as it is expressed in the *Clementine Liturgy*. And therefore we cannot be said so properly to worship as Christians, as when we join in those sacred Mysteries that Christ has made peculiar to his own Religion: And it cannot be imagined, that it should be at our own Disposal, whether we would perform it or no, when it was ordained as the peculiar Service of Christians, to distinguish them from all other Worshipers of the Deity; and as the principal Act whereby we partake of the Sacrifice of Christ made upon the Cross, and without which our publick Service wants its due Perfection. Upon which account the Primitive Christians (at least for a time in some Places) on no Day held their publick Assemblies without this *Christian Sacrifice*. *Justin*

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Martyr in his *Second Apology* instances in this Sacred Ordinance, as a constant part of the Lord's Day Service; and there is no great doubt, but that each Lord's Day was that *Status Dies*, that set time on which *Pliny* tells the

Lib. 10. Ep. 97.

Emperor *Trajan*, the Christians in *Bythinia* met together to bind themselves with an Oath, not to steal or rob, or withhold what was deposited with them, or commit any sort of Wickedness. And long after, in the time of *St. Basil*, who com-

mends a daily Communion, he shews us how near

Epist. 289. ad
Cæsar.

the Practice in his Days came to it:

The Christians then not only communicated constantly four times a Week, but on other Days when they celebrated the Memory of any Martyr. And the Faithful, that joined in all other parts of the Publick Worship never failed in partaking of the Blessed Sacrament.

What Opinion the ancient Christians had of those that turned their Backs upon this holy Ordinance, may be collected from one of those

Can. XI.

Canons which are called

Apostolical; whereby all the Faithful that

32 *The* OBLIGATIONS *to*

that came to their publick Assemblies, and heard the Holy Scriptures, and did not continue to partake of the Holy Sacrament, were liable to be separated from the Communion of Christians.

The *third* Argument for the frequent performance of this Christian Duty arises from the great *Benefits* that are *annex'd* to the *worthy participation* of this *Holy Ordinance*. By the Nature of our Circumstances in this World, we are surrounded with variety of Temptations, no Condition of Life being free from the Assaults of our spiritual Enemies: So that it but too frequently happens, that we become a Prey to their Attempts, and are prevailed upon to transgress our Duty. Now when we are brought to a Sense of our Follies, and our Souls are pierced with an unfeigned Sorrow for having committed them; what surer Method have we to procure our Pardon from God, than by *shewing forth the Lord's Death*, by representing his bitter Passion to the Father, that so he would for his sake, according to the Tenour of his Covenant in him, be favourable and propitious

propitious to us miserable Sinners? We all know, by fatal Experience how unable we are of our selves to do any thing that is good; but this heavenly Banquet is the Food and Nourishment of our Souls; it gives new Life and Vigour to our pious Resolutions, and conveys Power and Strength to perform our Duty. We are convinced, that the Satisfactions of this Life can never complete our Happiness: But this Holy Sacrament inspires a Hope to be made equal to Angels; and no less than the Kingdom of Heaven is hereby made our Inheritance. So that a Man must be very insensible of his own Interest that neglects one of the best Instruments of advancing his Spiritual Welfare; and what can the Concern of the whole World promise us, compared to the Advantage of such gracious Vouchsafements? Neither is it probable, that a Man should retain a very grateful Sense of those stupendous Blessings purchased for us by the Death of Christ, when he refuses to give such an easie Instance of a thankful Heart. If therefore we pay any regard to the positive Command of

34 *The Measures of the* DUTY

our Saviour; if we are concerned to proclaim to the World, that we are really the Disciples of Jesus; if we are solicitous about growing in Grace, and desire above all things the Improvement of our Minds in all Christian Vertues, and breathe after a Life without Sorrow and without Sin; we must constantly attend this holy Ordinance, from whence we may expect the Pardon of our Sins, and all the other Benefits of Christ's Passion.

And when we are once convinced of those Obligations that enforce the Practice of this Duty, we must take care never to turn our Backs upon this holy Ordinance. The truest Measure of our Duty in this Particular, is to be taken from those Opportunities which the good Providence of God affords to us for this Purpose; there being no better way of determining the frequency of our Obligation to receive, than this of God's giving us the Opportunity. According to this Rule the Primitive Christians practised; who never withdrew themselves from the Lord's Supper, when it made a part of the publick Worship. And it is in
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the Communion of the Sacrament, as it is in the Communion of Prayers, and other parts of publick Worship, we are bound to joyn in them when Opportunities offer for the performing them, and we are not otherwise lawfully hinder'd. Whoever therefore shall neglect to communicate, and retires from the holy Table when the heavenly Banquet is there prepared, either does not thoroughly understand his Duty in this particular, or must be very defective in the performance of it. For as the Exhortation before the Communion suggests to us: *Who would not think it a great Injury and Wrong done to him, if he had prepared a rich Feast, and decked his Table with all kind of Provision, so that there lacked nothing but the Guests to sit down, and yet that they who were called, without any Cause should most unthankfully refuse to come?* And how can it be imagined, that a Man has a true Love for his Saviour, or a grateful Sense of his Sufferings, that shall refuse to make a thankful Remembrance of them, when our Saviour has commanded it, and the Providence of God offers him

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36 *The Nature of Preparation*

the Opportunity? I shall conclude this Head with the Judgment of two eminent Fathers, St. Chrysostom and St. Ambrose, whereby we may guess at the Sense of the Greek and the Latin Church, in relation to this Practice. The first, St. Chrysostom, delivers himself after this manner; *He who does not allow himself in the Practice of any known Sin, ought every Day to approach the Holy Table; but it is not safe for him, who has contracted a Habit of Sinning, and does not sincerely repent thereof, to communicate even upon the greatest Festival.* St. Ambrose gives us his Opinion, by way of Advice, in these Words, concerning the Holy Sacrament, *Receive daily what will be of daily Advantage to you: So live, that you may be fit to receive every Day; for he that is not fit to receive every Day, is not fit to receive once a Year.*

Secondly, I shall shew what Preparation is necessary to perform this Duty after an acceptable manner.

When we speak of Preparation for the Holy Sacrament, we suppose the Candidates to have been educated in the

for Frequent COMMUNION. 37

the Belief of the Christian Religion, that they have taken upon themselves the solemn Vow made at their Baptism, that they are instructed in what is necessary for a Christian to believe and practise, and that they have in some measure performed those Engagements which they solemnly ratified at their Confirmation. And therefore I think it very adviseable, before any one makes his first Communion, that he should consult the Priest of his Parish, that he may be satisfied how far he has complied with those Obligations he has lain under to Faith and Obedience, and may be farther examined as to those Qualifications that make a Man a fit Guest at the Lord's Table. And then the requisite Preparation will consist in understanding what is the Nature and End of that holy Action, and in the actual Exercise of such Christian Vertues, of which they are supposed to have laid a Foundation in the former Course of their Lives.

The *first* part of Preparation consists in the *informing our selves carefully in the Nature and End of this sacred Institution.* Enquiring what is meant by
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38 The HOLY COMMUNION

this holy Action, and to what purpose this blessed Sacrament was ordained. This necessary Knowledge once attained, is a standing Qualification in all our future Communions; and therefore we ought to take the more Pains to settle right Notions in our Minds concerning this matter, because they will be serviceable to us in all the remaining part of our Lives. In order to this purpose it will be necessary to read over the History of the

Mat. 26. 17, 26.

Mar. 14. 12, 20.

Luke 22. 7, 19.

1 Cor. 11. 24.

Institution of this Christian Sacrifice, as recorded by the Evangelists, and by St. Paul in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, who received what he taught in this matter by a divine Revelation. St. *Matthew's* account of it is this, That as our Saviour and his Disciples were eating the Passover, *Jesus took Bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the Disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my Body. And he took the Cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it, for this is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the Remission of Sins.*

But

the CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE. 39

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this Fruit of the Vine, until that Day I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. And when they had sung an Hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. St. Mark makes the same Relation, and St. Luke and St. Paul concur in the same particulars, with the addition of this positive Injunction, *Do this in remembrance of me.* From which places it will appear that when our Saviour Jesus Christ celebrated the Jewish Sacrifice of the Passover with his Disciples a little before his Sufferings, he substituted the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, as the true Christian Sacrifice, in the room of the Passover; and ordained it as a Rite to invoke his Father by, instead of the manifold and bloody Sacrifices of the Law, and to be a mean of Supplication and Address to God in the New Testament, as they were in the Old. To which end our Saviour first offers up the Creatures of Bread and Wine to God, as an acknowledgment of his Sovereignty, by taking the Bread and Wine into his sacred Hands, by looking up to Heaven,

40 *The HOLY COMMUNION*

and giving Thanks; and then by Blessing the Elements, he makes them the Symbols of his Body and Blood, and distributed them to his Disciples, to eat and drink them in Commemoration of him. So that the Design of instituting the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, was to constitute a Christian Sacrifice, wherein God mystically entertains Man at his own Table, in token of Amity and Friendship with him; which that he might do, the Bread and the Wine are offered to God, to acknowledge him Lord of the Creatures; and accordingly in the ancient Church they were laid on the holy Table by the Priest, (as they are still ordered to be done by the Rubrick in the Church of *England*) and tendered to God by this short Prayer, *Lord, we offer thy own out of what thou hast bountifully given us*; which by Consecration being made Symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ, we thereby represent to God the Father the Passion of his Son, to the end that he may for his sake, according to the Tenour of his Covenant in him, be favourable and propitious to us, miserable Sinners.

That

the CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE. 41

That as Christ intercedes continually for us in Heaven, by presenting his Death and Satisfaction to his Father; so the Church on Earth in like manner may approach the Throne of Grace, by representing Christ unto his Father in these holy Mysteries of his Death and Passion. That what every Christian does mentally and vocally, when he recommends his Prayers to God the Father through Jesus Christ, making mention of his Death and Satisfaction; That in the Publick Service of the Church is done by this *Rite*, which our Saviour commanded in Commemoration of him.

The *Incense* and *Mincha*, or the Offering prophesied of by *Malachi*, 1. 11. whereby *God's Name was to be great among the Gentiles*, is applied by the *primitive Fathers* to this Christian Sacrifice or solemn Worship in the Eucharist, taught by our Blessed Saviour to his Disciples, to be observed by all that should believe in his Name. The *Incense* which denotes the Prayers of the Saints, representing the Spiritual part of the Christian Sacrifice, which is Prayer, Thanksgiving, and Commemoration; the *Mincha* or Offering re-

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42 *The* HOLY COMMUNION

presenting the material part thereof, which is a Present of Bread and Wine, which may very well be called a *Pure Offering*, not only in respect of Christ, whom it signifies and represents, who is a Sacrifice without all Spot, Blemish and Imperfection; But in respect of that Purity of Conscience and Freedom from Malice, with which it was to be offer'd. For it is in that singular Purity, that the Christian Oblation differs from that of the *Jews*, who were not prohibited to offer Sacrifices and other Gifts, tho' they were at enmity with one another. And it is reasonable to think that the Ground for introducing the Kiss of Charity in the Apostolical Times, was, that Christians might express their mutual Love and Freedom from Malice when they approached the Altar.

The ancients held the Oblation in the Eucharist to be answerable in some respects to the legal Sacrifices. They believed that our blessed Saviour ordained the Sacrament of the Eucharist, as a Rite of Prayer and Praise to God, instead of the manifold and bloody Sacrifices of the Law. That the legal
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the CHRISTIAN SACRIFICE. 43

Sacrifices were Rites to invoke God by, and for praising and blessing him for his Mercies, is evident from Scripture. Instead therefore of slaying of Beasts, and burning Incense, whereby they praised God, and called upon his Name under the Old Testament, our Saviour under the New appointed this Sacrament of Bread and Wine, as a Rite whereby to give Thanks and make Supplication to his Father in his Name. That as the legal Sacrifices were Types and Shadows of the great Sacrifice on the Cross, and had a Relation to Christ that was to come, so the Christian Sacrifice of Bread and Wine looks back and has a Relation to Christ that was crucified.

1 Sam. 7. 9.
C. 13. V. 12.
Ezr. 6. 10.
Prov. 15. 8.
2 Chro. 29. 27.

There was also among the Jews an ancient ^a Tradition, as has been ob-

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served

* Theodorus Biblander, lib. 2. de S Trinitate:
*Erat apud veteres Habreos dogma receptissimum, in
adventu Messie Benedicti cessatura esse omnia le-
galia Sacrificia tantumque celebrandum Sacrificium
Thoda: Gratiarum actionis, Laudis
& Confessionis, & illud peragendum
pane & vino; sicuti Melchisedec*

Vox sHebraea significat Laudem vel gratiarum actionem.

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44 The HOLY COMMUNION

ſerved by learned Men, *That in the Time of the Meſſias all Sacrifices ſhould ceaſe but that of Bread and Wine.* And this Oblation of the Bread and Wine is implied in St. Paul's Parallel of the Lord's Supper, and the Sacrifices of the

1 Cor. 10. 21. Gentiles, *You cannot, ſays*

he, be Partakers of the Table of the Lord and the Table of the Devils, becauſe they imply contrary Covenants, incompatible one with the other. Now here it is manifeſt, that the *Table of Devils* is ſo called, becauſe it conſiſted of Meats offered to Devils, where-
by

Rex Salem & Sacerdos Dei Altiffimi temporibus Abrahami panem & vinum protulit.

The truth of this farther appears, not only from the Teſtimony of R. Kimchi, cited by the learned Biſhop Hooper, but from the Bereſchit Rabba, that is the larger Commentary of the Jews upon Geneſis, where R. Phinehas is quoted, upon the 28th of Numbers, ſpeaking theſe Words, *Tempore Meſſie omnia ſacrificia ceſſabunt, ſed ſacrificium panis & vini non ceſſabit, ſicuti dictum eſt Gen. 14. Et Melchisedec Rex Salem protulit panem & vinum. Et Melchisedicum Rex Meſſias excipiet a ceſſatione ſacrificiorum ſicuti dicitur, Pſal. 110. Tu es Sacerdos in æternum ſecundum ordinem Melchisedec.*

Rabbi Johai alſo upon the ſame Chapter of Numbers, ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe; *Tempore Meſſie omnia Sacrificia deſinent; Sacrificium vero panis & vini nunquam deſinet.* Which he eaden-
vours to confirm by ſeveral Texts of Scripture.

by those that eat thereof eat of the Devil's Provision; therefore the *Table* of the *Lord* is called his Table, not only because he ordained it; but because it consisted of Meats offered to him. The Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, *St. Paul*, insinuates the same thing, *We have an* C. 13. V. 10.

Altar, saith he, *whereof they have no right to eat which serve the Tabernacle.*

By which it is plain, there was an Altar in the Christian Church, besides that in the Jewish Temple, and consequently a Sacrifice, not only the spiritual one of Prayer and Thanksgiving, but the material one of Bread and Wine, sufficiently signified by the Word *Eating*.

The first Christian Writer after the Apostles, *St. Clement*, in his Epistle to the *Corinthians*, uses the Phrase, *Offering the Gifts* for the

Προσέβησκον
τας τὰ δῶρα
Edit. Ox. p. 94.

Administration of the Sacrament; and that the succeeding Writers in the Christian Church observed the same Stile, is clearly proved by the learned and pious Mr. *Mede* in his *Christian Sacrifice*. Hence we may observe, that the holy Sacrament consists of two parts,

46 *The* HOLY COMMUNION

the *Earthly*, which are the Elements of Bread and Wine; and the *Heavenly*, which is the Power of the Holy Ghost descending upon Consecration, and sanctifying the Bread and Wine, and invigorating them with the divine Virtue of Christ's Body and Blood. For tho', as *Theodoret* speaks, *The Symbols of our Lord's Body and Blood, after the Prayer of Consecration are changed, and become*

Dial. 2.

other; yet they depart not from their own Nature, for they remain in their former Essence, and Figure, and Shape, and are visible and sensible, such as before they were. And the Priest that officiated in the ancient Church not only rehearsed the Evangelical History of the Institution of this holy Sacrament, and pronounced those words of our Saviour, *This is my Body, this is my Blood*; but he offered up a Prayer of Consecration to God, beseeching him *That he would send down his Holy Spirit upon the Bread and Wine presented unto him on the Altar, and that he would so sanctifie them, that they might become the Body and Blood of his Son Jesus Christ*: Not with respect to the gross

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Compages or Substance, but only as to the Spiritual Energy and Vertue of his holy Flesh and Blood, communicated to the blessed Elements by the Power and Operation of the Holy Ghost descending upon them; whereby the *Body and Blood of Christ is verily and indeed taken by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper.* This Prayer is found in all the ancient Liturgies; and some learned Men have thought that

Rom. 15. 16.

St. Paul alluded to something of this Nature, when he speaks of the *Offering of the Gentiles* being made *acceptable* by the *Sanctification* of the *Holy Ghost*; there being no less than five *Liturgical Words* in that Text, as has been observed by learned Men.

And as this Christian Sacrifice was designed to render God propitious to us, by representing to him the Merits of our Saviour's Sufferings; so it was instituted to be a standing *Monument* of the *infinite Love* of our Saviour, in dying for us; and by eating and drinking at God's Table, according to Christ's Appointment, to fix in our Souls the Memory of those invaluable Blessings he has purchased for us; and to commu-

48 *The Power of Administring*

nicate to all worthy Receivers the Benefit of his Sacrifice upon the Cross; upon which account it is called *The Communion of his Body and Blood*. And it was moreover ordained to be a *Band of Union* to knit Christians together in the same Fellowship and Communion. Thus the infinite Love of Christ appeared not only in giving himself to die for us, but in so far complying with the weakness of our Nature, as to institute and ordain holy Mysteries as Pledges of his Love, and for a continual remembrance of his Death to our great and endless Comfort.

And since we live in an Age that is inclinable to make all the *inherent Powers* in the *Priesthood*, to be the Effects of *Priestcraft*; and that others take upon them to sign and seal Covenants in God's Name, who have received no Commission to that purpose; It will be fit for any Man that prepares himself for this holy Ordinance, to consider who has the Power of *administring* this *holy Sacrament*; whether *Lay-men* as well as *Clergy-men* that have received their Commission by Succession from the Apostles. This
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Consideration I am sure will be of great Comfort to the faithful Members of the Church of *England*, which has preserved the ancient Apostolical Government, and the Primitive Orders in a due Subordination, whereby they are secured of a right and truly *Canonical Ministry*.

Now to satisfy our selves in these Enquiries we must observe, that in the first Institution of this Sacrament, it was celebrated by our Lord and Master *Jesus Christ*; He blessed the Bread and Wine, and gave both to his Disciples; and he himself was, as the *Apostle* calls him, the *High Priest over the House of God*. And indeed, the Design of the Epistle to the *Hebrews* seems to be to shew us the difference between the two *Covenants*, the Nature of the *Levitical* and *Evangelical* Priesthood, what Necessity there was of a change from the one to the other; that the Evangelical was after the Order of *Melchisedec*; that our *Saviour* was the *High-Priest* of that Order, and that this Honour he took not to himself, but was called of God to it, as well as *Aaron* was to his. The Sacrament

50 *The Power of Administring*

crament being thus instituted, and the Elements being consecrated by a Priest at the first celebration of it; the Apostles kept close to their Master's Institution; being commanded to *do the same in remembrance of him*; they consecrated the Elements, and gave them to the People, as he before did to them; and the same did the Bishops, their Successors after them, and those that they appointed. And this was so constantly and universally practised in these early times, that one Instance is not to be brought to the contrary.

Besides, the very Nature of a Sacrament requires commissioned Officers for the Administrations of it. For Sacraments being Seals of the Covenant of Grace, of that Covenant between God and Man, which our Saviour purchased for us, and confirmed with his Blood: Who can seal this Covenant, unless such as are empowered by God to transact with us in his Name? On our part to offer up our Prayers and Supplications to him; and on his, to bless us, to absolve us from our Sins upon Repentance, and to seal the Pardon of them, by admitting us to partake of these holy Mysteries.

To

the HOLY SACRAMENT. 51

To this End the Apostles were careful in providing good Men to succeed them in their Ministry ; St. Paul was earnest with Titus to *ordain Elders in every City*, and with Timothy, to *lay Hands suddenly on no Man* ; and in his Epistles to both, he describes, and that nicely too, the Qualifications of those that were to be admitted to Ecclesiastical Orders. In the Church of *Corinth* there were Prophets and Teachers, Helpers and Governours, which were their Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Now what need was there of this Distinction, and of this great care and caution in conferring Orders ; if they had no particular Powers to exercise, and that every Lay-man had an equal Right to dispence them. Our Church in asserting the *Supremacy of Sovereign Magistrates* has declared that

the *Ministring either of* Art. 37.
God's Word or of the Sacraments is not given to Princes, because they are not invested with, nor have a Sovereign Disposal of the Power of Orders.

But the Practice of the Christian Church from the beginning of Christianity sufficiently confutes the Reasonings

52 *The Power of Administring*

ings of *Theists* and *Enthusiasts*; and Matter of Fact is too solid and substantial an Argument to be confuted by Art and Sophistry. St. Clement in his

Epistle to the *Corinthians* Ox. Ed. p. 489. tells us, when the Apostles

planted Churches, they made the first Fruits of those they converted Bishops and Deacons over those that should afterwards believe. And that as the Priests

have the proper Services appointed them,

appertaining to their Mi-

nistries; so the Lay-man is

confined within the Bounds of what is com-

manded to Lay-men. And in another

Places he speaks to this purpose, All those

Duties which the Lord hath commanded

us to do, we ought to do them

regularly and orderly; our

Oblations and divine Services to celebrate

them on set and appointed Times. For so

hath he ordained, not that we should do

them at hap bazard, and without order, but

at certain determinate Days and Times;

where also, and by whom he will have

them executed, himself hath defined ac-

cording to his supreme Will. St. Igna-

tius, who was Disciple to St. John and

Bishop of Antioch, in his Epistle to the

Smyrnaeans,

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Smyrnaens, p. 6. is more expresse to this purpose; *Let no Man do any thing*, says he, *of what belongs to the Church without the Bishop: Let that Eucharist be esteemed firm and valid, which is either administred by the Bishop, or by him whom he authorises: Wheresoever the Bishop shall appear, there the People ought to be, as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholick Church. It is not lawful without the Bishop, either to baptise or to celebrate the holy Communion; for whatsoever he shall approve that will be acceptable to God, to the end that whatsoever is done may be regular and of force.* And *Tertullian* testifies of the Christians of his Time, *That as they did receive the Sacrament of the Eucharist in their Meetings before Day, so it was only from the Hands of their Bishops.*

De Coro. Mil.
cap. 3. Nec de
aliorum manu,
quam Presiden-
tium.

I would only desire those, who are too apt to attack the *Christian Priests*, as the rebellious Princes did *Moses* and *Aaron*, by insinuating, that *they take too much upon them*; and by demanding, wherefore *they lift up themselves above the Congregation of*

Numb. 16. 3.

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54 *The Pious Qualifications*

the Lord? to be mindful of their Punishment, and to consider how severely God revenged their Insolence, in causing the Earth to open her Mouth, and to swallow up them and all their Adherents.

The *Second* part of *Preparation* consists in those *pious Dispositions* of Mind, which qualifie us to receive this Sacrament after a worthy manner, and make us fit Guests at the Lord's Table. And therefore when we plead the Merit of Christ's Death and Passion before God the Father in this Christian Sacrifice, it ought to be accompanied with a most *thankful acknowledgment* of those great Blessings our Saviour has purchased for us by his Sufferings, and with a publick proclaiming to all the World, the great Sense we have of such invaluable Kindness. With a *heartly Repentance* for all the Sins we have been guilty of in Thought, Word and Deed; for this was the end of his Death, to reconcile us to
 Acts 3. 26. God, by *turning us from*

our Iniquities. With *firm Resolutions* of better Obedience; for he gave himself for us, *to purifie to himself*

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for Frequent COMMUNION. 55

*himself a peculiar People
zealous of good Works.* Tit. 2. 14.

With an *entire Resignation* of our Souls
and Bodies to be a reasonable, holy,
and lively Sacrifice unto him; for he
has the justest Claim to us, because he
purchased us at the Price

of his own Blood. With a 1 Pet. 1. 19.

constant endeavour to make some pro-
ficiency in all the Vertues of the Chri-
stian Life, because he has obtained for
us by the Merits of his Sufferings, the
Grace and Alliance of God's Holy
Spirit, to work in us both

to will and to do of his Phil. 2. 12.

good Pleasure. With a *Readiness* of
Mind to be *reconciled* to all those that
have offended us, because *when we were*
Enemies we were reconciled

to God by the Death of his Rom. 5. 10.

Son. With *heartly and sincere Love and*
Charity to our Brethren, contributing
all we can to the relief of Christ's poor
distressed Members, by reason he was
so liberal of his inestimable Blood for
us. Lastly, with the *purity* of our *Inten-*
tion, sincerely aiming at and design-
ing to answer all those ends and pur-
poses for which this holy Sacrament

was

56 *The Pious Qualifications*

was ordained; and not merely to comply with Custom, and to qualifie our selves for a profitable Employment.

But then it must be noted, that all these Qualifications are the same that we are oblig'd to acquire by our *Baptismal Vow*, and are necessary in the Course of a Christian Life, and in the Use of all other Means of Grace. For except we confess our Sins with an humble, penitent and obedient Heart, and are ready to forgive those that have offended us, and ask with Faith, even our Prayers and Praises will find no acceptance at the Throne of Grace: Indeed *Charity* and *Good Will* towards all Men, was always thought so necessary a Qualification for the Celebration of this *Christian Sacrifice*, that in the ancient Church, at the very entrance thereunto, the *Deacon* was wont to proclaim, *Let no Man have ought against his Brother*: And this practice was founded upon our Saviour's Ordinance, in his divine Sermon upon the Mount, *If thou bringest thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee, leave the Gift before the Altar*.

Mat. 5. 23, 24.

for Frequent COMMUNION. 57

Altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift. Which Scripture, in the sense of the *Primitive Church*, was taken to be an Evangelical Constitution, implied by way of Anticipation that our Saviour would leave some Rite to his Church, instead and after the manner of the Sacrifices of the Law, which should begin with an Oblation, as they did; and that, to require this proper and peculiar Qualification in the Offerer, *to be at Peace, and without Enmity with his Brother*; insomuch that *Irenæus* seems to place that Purity of the Evangelical Oblation, prophesied of by *Malachi*, principally in this Requisite.

Lib. 4. cap. 34.

Chap. I. V. II.

And besides this, the only Duty the Scripture seems to make peculiar to the Receiving the holy Sacrament, is *Self-Examination*. This is St. Paul's Direction, *Let a Man examine himself, and so let*

1 Cor. II. 28.

him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup; which if taken in the largest Sense, for searching into the State of our Souls in order to know how far

58 *The Duty of Self-Examination*

we believe and practise what is required of us, and to amend for the future what has been amiss in our past Conduct, is certainly obliging at other times, as well as before the Sacrament; and 'tis impossible a Christian should govern his Life with that necessary Care and Watchfulness that is required, without practising of it very frequently. And yet I believe, if the Sense of *St. Paul* be impartially weighed in that matter, it will appear, that the Examination he recommends, is not that of our State and Condition towards God, and of our Duty in general; but an *Examination* of our *manner of Eating the Lord's Supper by Christ's Institution* of it, to see whether our behaviour comports with the Rules of the Institution, and with the end for which it was instituted. For to remedy the Disorders that were in the Church of *Corinth*, in the Administration of the *Lord's Supper*, he sets before them Christ's Institution of the holy Sacrament, that they might acquaint themselves with the manner and end proposed in the partaking of it; so that by that, every one might examine his Comportment therein,

before the Holy Communion. 59

therein, whether conformable to that Institution, and suited to that End. In the account *St Paul* gives of Christ's Institution, he remarks, that Eating and Drinking in the Sacrament, was no part of common Eating and Drinking for Hunger and Thirst, but to represent Christ's Body and Blood, to be eaten and drank in remembrance of him, or as the Apostle expounds it himself, *to shew forth the Lord's Death*. He moreover observes, that this was done by all who were present united together in one Company at the same time. All which put together, shews what the Examination here proposed relates to; for the design of the Apostle being to reform those Abuses he found fault with in their celebrating the *Lord's Supper*, 'tis by that alone we must Interpret the Directions he gives concerning it, if we will suppose he talked pertinently to the Subject in Hand; which was to reduce the *Corinthians* from the Irregularities they were run into in this matter. And if the account of Christ's Institution be not brought in for their examining their Carriage by it, and their adjusting their
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60 *The Duty of Self-Examination*

Comportment to it, it will be hard to find a Reason for what purpose it is here mentioned.

From hence we may therefore gather what that unworthy Receiving was, which is condemned in the *Corinthians* by St. Paul, and what was the Punishment annexed to it: It was their disorderly and irreverent Participation of the *Lord's Supper*; it was their Eating and Drinking after an unworthy manner, without a due regard to the Manner and End of that holy Institution; without a due Respect had to the Lord's Body, in a discriminating and purely Sacramental Use of the Bread and Wine that represented it. It being the Custom of the Christians in the Apostolical times to receive the *holy Eucharist* after their *Feasts of Charity*, wherein the Rich and the Poor were wont to eat together with great Sobriety and Temperance; In the Church of *Corinth* this method was not observed; the Poor were not admitted to this common Feast; for *in eating every one took before each other his own Supper*, so that when some wanted, others were guilty of scandalous Excess, and

gross

before the Holy Communion. 61

gross Intemperance: And the Effect of it was, *They did not discern the Lord's Body.* They made no difference between the Sacrament and a common Meal; between what was to sustain their Bodies and what was to nourish their Souls. So that to eat the Bread, and drink of the Cup, in the holy Sacrament without a due and direct discrimination had to the Lord's Body, by separating the Bread and Wine from the common Use, of eating and drinking for Hunger and Thirst, was to *eat unworthily.* The Punishment annexed to these Miscarriages, were Infirmities, Sicknes, and temporal Death, with which God corrected them, that they might not be condemned with the unbelieving World. By which it appears, that Temporal Judgments must be understood by the Word our Translators render *Damnation.* Tho' if these Temporal Judgments had not produced Amendment and Reformation, such a contempt of holy things might have made them obnoxious to the eternal Judgment of God.

Now it appears farther, by the Nature of these Punishments, that the Examination

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mination

62 *The Persons not Qualified*

mination St *Paul* recommends, referred to the Institution of the Sacrament; for if the Unworthiness here spoken of, was either Unbelief, or any of those Sins which are usually made the Matter of Examination, 'tis to be presumed the Apostle would not wholly have pass'd them over in Silence: This at least is certain, that the Punishment of these Sins is infinitely greater than that which God here inflicts on unworthy Receivers, whether they who are guilty of them receive the Sacrament or no.

That then which makes a Man absolutely unfit to receive the holy Sacrament, besides Ignorance of the meaning of that holy Institution, is the living in the constant habitual Practice of any known Sin without Repentance. Such a Man's approach to the holy Table would be a mocking of God, and a great Contempt of his Authority; and tho' the ancient Discipline of the Church is at a low ebb among us, yet there is still Power to debar such scandalous and open Sinners the Communion, and a particular

Can. XXVI.

Order to Parochial Ministers not to admit such. But then it ought

for Frequent COMMUNION. 63

ought to be observed, that this impenitent State makes our Prayers also an Abomination to the Lord; for to profess our selves sorry for our Sins, and resolved to forsake them, when we have no sense of the one, nor are determined to do the other, is the greatest Affront imaginable to our Maker, by supposing that either he does not know our Hearts, or that he will be pleased when we draw near to him with our Lips, though our Hearts are far from him.

There is a case indeed, wherein, I think, a Man may be supposed *qualified* to attend the *publick Prayers* of the Church, and yet that it may be fit for him to *abstain* from *approaching* the Altar; which is when a Man first rises by *unfeigned Repentance* from a *deplorable fall into some grievous Sin*; the first Scene of his penitential Sorrows should pass in the Exercise of Mortification and Self-denial, and some time may be necessary to prove the Sincerity of his return to his Duty. And this is agreeable to the *discipline* of the Church in the primitive Times, when whoever was found guilty of any scan-

64 *The Persons not Qualified*

dalous Fault, was according to the Nature of the Offence debarred the Communion a shorter or a longer time; so that it will very well become the Modesty of a Penitent in these loose times wherein the Christian *discipline* is relaxed, to exercise it upon himself; it being reasonable, that the Sense of any heinous Crime lately committed should so far humble and mortifie us, as to make us ready and willing to impose this Penance upon our selves; as thinking our selves for some time unworthy to participate in the highest and most solemn Act of Religion.

In short, the best Preparation for the Sacrament is a constant endeavour to live as becomes that holy Religion we profess. For they who really believe the Christian Religion, and sincerely govern their Lives by the Doctrines and Precepts of the Gospel of the Blessed Jesus, have all that substantial Preparation that qualifies them to partake in this holy Ordinance, and ought to receive at any time when there is an Opportunity, though they were not before hand acquainted with it. Indeed when they have a foresight

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for Frequent COMMUNION. 65

of their communicating, 'tis very adviseable they should trim their Lamps, examine the State of their Minds, renew their Repentance, exercise their Charity, enlarge their Devotions, spiritualize their Affections; and in order to this, should retire from Business and Pleasure, as far as the Nature of their Circumstances will admit; that by Prayer, Fasting, and Alms deeds, their Minds may be raised to relish Spiritual Enjoyments. But still great care must be taken, that when a Man is habitually prepared, he do not impose upon himself so much actual preparation, as shall make him lose an Opportunity of receiving the holy Sacrament, when he has not had time to go through with that Method he has prescribed to himself.

Thirdly, I shall endeavour to answer some Objections against Frequent Communion.

Object. 1. *The first usual Objection Men make is, That they are unworthy to receive the holy Sacrament, and consequently if they approach God's Table they shall eat and drink Damnation to themselves.*

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Answer.

66. *The Objection of Unworthiness*

Answer. If this Objection is made by such who live in a course of Wickedness, 'tis certain as long as they resolve to continue such, they are very unfit to approach these holy Mysteries; while they are at open defiance with God Almighty, break all his Laws, and refuse all Offers of Reconciliation, they ought not to be admitted as Guests at God's holy Table; and if the *Discipline* of the *Church* were restored, which is founded upon the Laws of Christ and his Apostles, and sufficiently explained to us by primitive Practice, such refractory Sinners should be excommunicated, and thrown out of the Community of Christians, and not be re-admitted till they had given publick Testimonies of their Sorrow and Repentance. But all Men easily see the Vanity of this Excuse, because one Fault can never justify the commission of another.

But if this Objection is made by devout People, to excuse their not frequenting the Christian Sacrifice, they must consider, that this Argument push'd home, ought to hinder them from ever communicating. For if

Men

for Frequent COMMUNION. 67

Men take the Word *Unworthy* in a strict Sense, for such Persons as no way deserve those great Benefits that are offer'd and conferr'd in the holy Sacrament, no Man should ever receive at all, because no Man deserves any thing at God's Hands, much less those invaluable Blessings purchased for us by Christ's Death; and yet they that make the Objection do venture at some great Solemnities to approach these holy Mysteries; which makes it wonderful how they can reconcile this their Notion of Unworthiness, with their Practice of receiving at such Seasons; or else they must have at those times a better Opinion of themselves than is consistent with Christian Humility. But there is a great difference to be made between deserving that Favour, and between receiving that Favour after a worthy and fit manner. We may have no merit to procure us such Benefits as may be conferred upon us; and yet if we receive them with a great Sense of Gratitude, acknowledging the Bounty of the Giver, with a great Sense of our own Demerit, owning they are infinitely above

68 *The Objection of Unworthiness*

our Deserts, with care and diligence to receive them in the way and manner prescribed, and with Resolutions of making the best Returns we are capable of; we may be truly said to receive such Favours after a worthy manner, tho' we are never so unworthy of the Benefits themselves.

The *unworthy eating and drinking*, condemned by St. Paul in the *Corinthians*, has been already explained, with the Punishment annex'd to it; which will certainly, if seriously considered, abate those Fears which but too often possess devout Souls; and if they are in earnest, will be able to turn their Fears quite on the contrary side, and make them apprehensive of provoking God, by neglecting a *positive Command* of our Saviour's, by him laid upon all Christians.

It is not to be supposed, that we must be *perfect* and strong grown Christians before we partake of these *Divine Mysteries*; 'tis enough we sincerely desire to be such, and if so, we shall find the frequent use of the *holy Communion* to be the most effectual means to that purpose. We are here in a Vale

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for Frequent COMMUNION. 69

of Tears; where should we seek for Comfort, but from the Source of all Joy and Satisfaction? We are surrounded with a Multitude of Temptations, where shall we find Strength to resist them, but in this Divine Armoury? We are loaded with many Imperfections, and sometimes, by negligence or surprize, fall a Prey to the Tempter, what so proper to wash away our Stain, as that precious inestimable Blood, which was shed to that very end and purpose? So that the very *Sense* of our *unworthiness*, if rightly applied, should quicken our *Zeal* in approaching frequently, that we might become better.

Object. 2. Some Object, *That the frequent use of the holy Sacrament may be apt to abate and diminish that Reverence and Respect which Men ought to have for it.*

Ans. This Objection is founded upon the Experience Men have, that their Familiarity and intimate Converse with Men and Things in this World, is apt to diminish their Value and Respect for them; not considering that it is quite the contrary in Spiritual Things, the frequent Use whereof is the like-

70 *The Objection of Unworthiness*

liest means to encrease our Veneration and Respect towards them. An uninterrupted Enjoyment of the good things of this World may very well lessen our Esteem of them, because it convinces us they do not administer that Happiness which they promise; but the more we employ our selves in Spiritual Exercises, we find they produce a Satisfaction that rises above what we expected, or worldly Men can imagine. The better we know Men, the more we discover their Frailties and Imperfections; at a distance we see only the Brightness of their good Qualities, but a closer Correspondence acquaints us with their Failings; and therefore our Familiarity with the best of Men may be apt to abate that Respect we paid them at a distance, by reason of that mixture of Frailty which accompanies their greatest Vertues. But the oftner we converse with God in his holy Ordinances, the more we shall admire his divine Perfections, and the more we shall be disposed to conform our selves to his likeness; for an Object of infinite Perfection in it self, and of infinite goodness to us,

will

for frequent COMMUNION. 17

will always raise our Admiration and heighten our Respect and Esteem the more we contemplate it: it being the discovery of some Imperfection, of some flaw, where we thought there was none, that lessens our Esteem and provokes our Contempt.

Object. 3. Others pretend, *That the Custom of frequent Communion diminishes the Profit and Advantage that is to be reaped from that divine Institution.*

Ans. This Objection is founded upon the unhappy Temper of most Men, who are apt to put the greatest value upon things that are rare and uncommon, and to neglect, or at least to perform Actions of the greatest Consequence after a slight and careless manner when they frequently occur. But if the fear of falling into this weakness were a sufficient Reason to abstain from frequent Communion, it would hold with as much Force against frequent Prayer, which the Precepts of the Gospel make necessary; and therefore as in praying often we at length learn to pray well, so in frequently receiving the holy Sacrament, that Fervour and Appetite sensibly encreases, which is

70 *The Objection of Unworthiness*

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So necessary to make us receive with Advantage. If People reap no Profit from their frequent Communions, the Fault must be laid upon the Negligence of their Lives, and upon the slight Care they take in the Examination of their Consciences; and if upon a strict inquiry they find any secret Sin unrepented of, any habitual neglect of their Duty, this great Bar to the influence of Grace must be removed. And if, after that, they still make the same Complaint, they must consider what they mean by Unprofitableness; for 'tis certain, if we bring a right Temper of Mind, the Body and Blood of Christ in the Sacrament is of great Profit and Advantage to us. If we are penitent it seals to us the Pardon of our Sins; if we are sincere, it fortifies our Resolutions; if we believe, it strengthens our Faith; and if we are real and in earnest, it enflames our Charity; but if we think it must cure us of all those Imperfections which are inseparable from the frailty of our Nature, we deceive our selves. The best of Christians groan under the Perverseness and Impotence of corrupt Nature.

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Or if we expect always those heavenly Joys and Raptures which God is pleased sometimes to communicate to his faithful and devout Servants, we are too presumptuous; God may deny us those fore-tastes of Bliss to keep us humble, and to quicken our Industry to attain them; and if God does not communicate himself to us after that way and manner our shallow Reason thinks most desirable, it does not become us to lay any blame upon this divine Ordinance; which is certainly in it self the most efficacious means to make us just and charitable, pious and devout. And they that owe their Ardours at the Altar to their seldom approaching the holy Table, have too much Reason to conclude they are more affected from the rarity and unusualness of the Action, than from the divine Virtue that flows from it; like those that converse seldom with Men of great Quality and Title, the awe they feel of their Greatness proceeds more from their not being used to frequent their Company, than from the Opinion of their true Worth and Dignity. So that these People seem rather
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to be under the Power of Nature than the Influences of Grace.

I am sure Experience will inform us, that the devoutest Ages of the Church were those wherein the Practice of frequent Communion most prevailed. Never was there so much Fervour and strictness of Piety, as when the Faithful met daily at the *Lord's Table*. And in the Accounts we have of the greatest Saints, never any one excelled in the Virtues of the Christian Life, but what distinguished himself by frequently nourishing his Soul with this heavenly Banquet.

Nay, I dare appeal to those holy Souls who live under a strict Sense of their Duty in this particular, and embrace all Opportunities which the Providence of God offers them to commemorate the ineffable Love of their dying Redeemer; whether they do not find themselves more determined to be just in all their Dealings, and ready to relieve the Necessities of the Poor; whether their Affections to the World do not lose Ground, and their Desires towards Heaven do not grow more intense and vigorous, whether their Pas-

sions

sions are not more calm, and their Patience and Submission to the Will of God more evident and conspicuous; whether they are not sensible of less fondness for Life, less earnestness for Trifles, less desire of Glory, less eagerness for Profit, and less concern for whatever the World most esteems?

Object. 4. It is farther objected, *That Men of great Business, either in publick or private Affairs, may justly be excused from frequent Communion, because they have not leisure to prepare for it.*

Ans. Any Business tho' lawful in its own Nature, yet if prosecuted to such a degree as to take Men off from the Care of their Souls, ought to be laid aside; because the Salvation of our Souls is of much greater Consequence than any Affair that relates to this World; and wise Men proportion their Care of a thing according to its worth; they do not spend their time upon Trifles, and neglect what may be of the greatest Consequence. I suppose they who make this Objection, design to be saved, and therefore must own that their Souls are of great-

er worth than their Bodies, and that they must certainly find a time to die, however careless and negligent they may be in making a due Preparation for it. But besides, the Care of our temporal concerns, and our Duty to God, are very consistent. A great deal of Business and the Duties of Religion may stand together, provided we govern our Affairs by Christian Principles. For tho' such Men have not leisure for so much actual Preparation, yet they may have all that habitual Preparation upon which the great stress ought to be laid in this Matter. Nay, even the conscientious discharge of their Business is an admirable qualification for receiving the Sacrament. A Man is serving God when he follows his Calling with Diligence, and observes Justice and Equity in all his Dealings; when he manages the Affairs of the Publick with Fidelity and Honesty, without selling Justice, without Oppression, and without sacrificing them to his private Interest. And the greater Dangers and Temptations he is exposed to, the greater need he has of
 God's

with Frequent COMMUNION. 77

God's Grace and Assistance which is abundantly communicated in this holy Ordinance. When we travel in Ways frequented by Robbers, we go well-armed and unite Companies, that we may be the better able to defend ourselves. So that the Man of Business who has any serious thoughts of another World, ought more especially to lay hold on such Opportunities, which may secure him against those Dangers he daily converses with, and which may fortifie him against those watchful Enemies that lie in wait to destroy him. For as they who have leisure ought frequently to receive the holy Communion, as the best improvement of their Time; so they that are engaged in many worldly Affairs ought to come often to the Sacrament, and learn how to sanctifie their Employments.

Object. 5. Others think they satisfy their Duty in this Particular, if they comply with the Command of the Church, which enjoins three times in the Year, whereof Easter to be one, and so think themselves excused from frequent Communion.

Rubr. after the Comm.
Can. 21.

Answer.

78 *The Church encourages*

Answ. These Objectors against frequent Communion quite mistake the Sense of the Church in this Injunction, who in her Exhortations excites us to frequent Communion, and therefore in most Parishes invites us at least every Month, and in some Churches every Sunday, and every Holy-Day, especially in Cathedrals, where all

Priests and Deacons are
Rubr. after the *enjoined at least to receive*
Commun. *every Lord's Day; except*

they have a reasonable Cause to the contrary. All that she says is, That Christians ought to communicate *at least* three times in the Year, and if that was the *minimum quod*; that is, the least that is absolutely necessary to denominate us Christians; which if we neglect, we deserve to be separated from that Body whereof Christ is the Head, and incur the Censures of the Church, which when rightly dispensed are very terrible. I would fain know if a Physician should tell a Man that just so much is absolutely necessary to maintain Life; if he should eat less he would not only endanger his Health, but run the hazard of starving

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ving himself; whether a Man that confines himself to such a Method would be thought to be in Love with Life, and whether those that have good Appetites could subsist under such a Discipline. It is just the same in our spiritual Life, so many times communicating preserves us from being separated from the Body of Christ, which is the Life of a Christian; except we are Members of his Body we cannot in any ordinary way partake of the favourable Influences of the Head, but this is not enough in order to our well-being. 'Tis a sign that we are weak and very imperfect Christians, if we have so small an Appetite for this spiritual Food, 'tis a sign we have little Relish for the things of God. Let us call to mind the Fervours of the Primitive Christians, who made the Commemoration of our Saviour in the Eucharist a constant part of their publick Worship. As the primitive Piety decayed, so the means of maintaining it were less frequented; and 'twas the bad Lives of Christians, and their total neglect of communicating, which made the Church oblige them to receive at some certain time

20 *The great Advantages of*

times under the penalty of Excommunication. And is it becoming a Man, that has any Sense of the Excellency of this Christian Institution, any value for the Privilege of being a Disciple of the crucified *Jesus* any Care of his Salvation, any desire of being perfect as God is perfect, to excuse himself from a necessary Duty by an Injunction, which was introduced by the Indevotion of negligent Christians? 'Tis not enough that we are Christians, we must grow in Grace, and the Man of God must be made perfect; of which when we are once convinced, we shall never neglect frequent Communion, because it is the most effectual means of attaining it.

Fourthly, I shall in short lay before you the great Advantages of frequent Communion

Our intimate converse with Temporal Things, and our Familiarity with the Delights and Satisfactions of Sense, is but too apt to take off our Minds from serious Thoughts, and to impair that Vigour and Resolution
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which ought to be employed about the one thing necessary. Now frequent Communion keeps *a lively Sense of Religion upon our Minds*, and invigorates them with fresh Strength and Power to perform our Duty. It is the proper nourishment of our Souls, without which we can no more maintain our Spiritual Life, than we can our Temporal, without eating and drinking.

As long as we carry these frail and sinful Bodies about us, the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, those constant Enemies to our true Happiness, will be making perpetual assaults upon our Virtue, and using their best Endeavours to corrupt our Innocence: Now frequent Communion is the *sovereign Remedy against all their Temptations*, by mortifying our Passions, by spiritualizing our Affections; for how can we yield to any sinful Satisfaction that crucified the *Lord of Glory*, or fix our Hearts upon perishing Objects, when God only deserves, as he requires, the whole Man?

One of the great Advantages of our Christianity consists in being made
Members

82 *The great Advantages of*

Members of Christ's Mystical Body, by reason of those happy Influences we derive from our Head; and our Happiness depends upon our enjoying this Blessed Privilege. Now frequent Communion *preserves this spiritual Union inviolable*, between Christ and all faithful Christians; by a mutual intercourse of Goodness and Compassion, in pardoning our Sins, in strengthening our feeble Virtues, and in communicating heavenly Joys and Foretastes of Happiness; and on our side, by repeated Acts of Adoration and Thankfulness, of Love and Admiration, of Resignation and Submission to his holy Will, and of sincere Professions of Constancy and Perseverance in his Service.

We are convinced by fatal Experience, that either through Surprise, or the Strength of Temptation, we cannot always stand upright; that we do those things we ought not to have done, and leave undone the things we ought to have done. Now this holy Sacrament *perfects our Repentance, and ratifies and confirms to us the Pardon of our Sins*; repairs those Breaches which our Fol-

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lies have made in our Souls, and applies to us in particular that Satisfaction which our Saviour made upon the Cross, and conveys to us the Benefits of that All-sufficient Sacrifice, whereby God the Father is render'd favourable and propitious to us, miserable Sinners.

In this Vale of Tears, Afflictions and Calamities are often the Lot of the best of Men. Now where shall we find *Comfort under these Difficulties*, or *Strength to contend with them*, but from that Provision that is administred at *God's Table*; from those Sufferings which our Saviour endured for us, and no ways deserved himself? For who can complain of Affliction in any kind, that considers what necessary Correctives they are of our Follies, what noble Improvements of our Virtue, and what a Testimony they are of our Love and Affection to the Blessed Jesus, when born with Patience and Submission; and that withal remembers, that his Lord and Master was made perfect through Sufferings? Besides, from this Divine Nourishment we receive such comfortable Impressions, as make the

84 *The Rules of the Church*

Troubles of this Life lose their Sting; and it supplies us with such inward Delights, as surpass all Expression, and which are only felt by those that frequently make the Experiment.

This is the most proper Method to make our Bodies Temples of the Holy Ghost, and the most effectual means to fit and prepare our Souls for the Eternal Enjoyment of God.

Fifthly, I shall shew the particular Care the Church of England has taken to prevent the Profanation of these holy Mysteries.

Such is the wise Discipline of our holy Mother, that both by her Rubricks and Canons, she trains us up by gradual steps from our Infancy, to a worthy Participation of this Christian Sacrifice. For in our Baptism she requires Sponsors, who shall stipulate for us, and give Security for our Christian Education in the Doctrines of Christianity, and in the Communion of the Catholick Church, they being engaged not only to instruct

us in all the necessary Points of Faith, but are charged to take care, when

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we are fit, that we be brought to the Bishop for Confirmation. This is an additional Security to that Duty, which Nature and Christianity has laid upon Parents, and a happy Provision in case of their Mortality. And not the Sureties only, but the Parish Priest or Curate is particularly enjoined to catechise, to instruct, to examine the Youth, and the common People in the Principles of the Christian Religion, according to the Church Catechism; which Catechism is an excellent Abridgment of all those things which are necessary to be believed and practised, in order to the welfare of our Souls. And farther, the Church requires, that none be presented to the Bishop for Confirmation, till they can give an account of their Faith; of which the Minister, who is to present them, is to be the Judge; and not even then to be confirmed, unless the Bishop approves of them, which supposes some Trial and Examination on his part. To all this the prudently adds this important Rule, That none be admitted to the

Can. 59, 60, 61.

Rub. after the Catech.

Rubrick after Confirm.

86 *The Rules of the Church*

holy Communion, until such time as they be confirmed, or be ready or desirous to be confirmed: The great Reason whereof is, that she may be satisfied, that those who promised by their Sureties in Baptism do renew and confirm the Contract then made; and that they will evermore endeavour themselves faithfully to observe such things as, by their own Confession, they have assented unto. And still, to preserve the Dignity of the holy sacrament, her Ministers are obliged according to the Direction of the ancient Canons, as well as our own, to

admit no notorious Offenders, or declared Schismatics, to the Participation of it. That this method may be more effectual, and that no unqualified Person may surreptitiously intrude, *Strangers from other Parishes*

are not to be received to the holy Communion; and as many as intend to be Partakers of it, shall signify their Names to the Curate at least some time the Day before; That notorious ill Livers may be admonish'd of their

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Faults, and that such as live in Malice and Hatred, and are at Variance with one another, may be reconciled, and give proofs of their Repentance, before they presume to come and offer their Gifts. When Warning is given for the Celebration of the holy Communion, the whole Congregation is put in Mind of their Duty by a pathological Exhortation. And if any have such a Sense of their Sins, that they cannot quiet their own Consciences, they are advised to consult their spiritual Guides, and to open their Grief, that they may receive ghostly Counsel and Advice, with the Benefit of Absolution. And even in the beginning of the Communion-Service, the Priest that officiates lays before the Communicants the danger of unworthy Receiving, and invites only such to approach as have the requisite Qualifications. So that if *pious Education*, if the *solemn ratifying our Baptismal Vow*, if *Conference with our Spiritual Guides*, if a particular *Prohibition of notorious Offenders*; and the *earnest Exhortations of our Pastors*, can secure these *holy Mysteries* from being abused, it must be owned our Church

has taken sufficient care to prevent it. Let them only consider, who neglect the observance of such admirable Rules how they will be able to answer it at the Great Day; and how far they are guilty of those Profanations, which they might prevent by a due Discharge of what the Church requires from them, and which they are under such strict obligations to observe; and how far they give occasion by their neglect to those Schisms, which are made upon the pretence of the scandalous Practices of that kind.

Upon this Subject I cannot forbear recommending to the *Reverend Clergy*, with great Submission, the advice of *St. Chrysostom*, which he gives in his 83^d *Homily* on the 26th *Chapter* of *St. Matthew's Gospel*; whose Episcopal Character as well as the great Opinion the Christian World had of his great Parts and eminent Piety, makes him very fit to be listen'd to in this particular: for he does not more earnestly press the Duty, than he does plainly assert the Authority of the *Sacerdotal Power* to affect it. *Let no Judas* saith he, *no Lover of Money, be present*

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at this Table. He that is not Christ's Disciple, let him depart from it. Let no inhumane, no cruel Person, no uncompassionate Man, or who is impure, come hither, I speak this to you that administer, as well as to you who partake; for it is necessary I speak these things to you, that you may take great care, and use your utmost diligence to distribute these Offerings aright: For your Punishment will be great if knowingly you suffer any wicked Person to partake of this Table, for his Blood shall be required at your hands. Wherefore if any General, any Provincial Governour, or the Emperor himself be not worthy, repel him; for thou hast a greater Power or Authority than He.

I am sensible it may be objected, That the same Laws that oblige Persons to receive the holy Sacrament as a Qualification for an Office, do oblige the Clergy to admit them. But then it must be considered, that the Power which Christ has invested his Church with, of admitting Persons into her Communion, and excluding them from it, no humane Laws can deprive her of. And therefore when the Laws re-

quire Men to receive this holy Sacrament to qualifie themselves for Offices, they always suppose, that they must first qualifie themselves according to the holy Laws of the Church, which are founded on those of the Gospel. So that it would be a great Injury to our Legislators to imagine, that if an unbaptised, or excommunicate Person, a Deist, or a notorious Sinner, should happen to obtain an Office, that they intended to oblige the Church to admit Persons under these bad Dispositions to be Partakers of the Blessed Eucharist.

Sixtly, I shall add some Directions as to the manner of performing this Duty of Receiving the holy Sacrament, with suitable Devotions on such Occasions.

As to the *Reverence* of our *Bodies*, our outward Behaviour ought to be govern'd by such Measures as the Church directs. For this Reason, as well as because it is the humblest posture, we must receive the holy Sacrament upon our Knees; which is most proper, when we are at the same time making
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our Addresses to the great Majesty of Heaven and Earth. The ancient Christians, in the time of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, received the *Consecrated Element* of

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tag. 5. §. 18.

Bread into the Palm of their right Hand, which being supported by their left was so carried to their Mouths, that no Portion of that Divine Nourishment could fall to the Ground. I am not certain that the Church means this, when she orders her Officers to deliver the Sa-

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crament to the People into their hands; but I think the Expression sufficiently justifies it, and therefore every Communicant may take the liberty of making use of it. And as we are to kneel or stand, as the Church directs, so I think it is fit we should not deviate from some devout Customs, that are established by ancient and general Practice, which in time come to have the Force of a Law. It is by such Rules that a beautiful Uniformity is created in our Deportment, as well as in our Petitions. And all our different Postures ought to be used with such Gravity and Seriousness as

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may demonstrate how intent we are when engaged in this Christian Sacrifice; and yet without such Affectations and Particularities as are apt to disturb those that are near us, and give occasion to others to suspect us, as acting a formal hypocritical part. To this end, when we put our Bodies into a praying Posture, with which I think leaning and lolling seems very inconsistent, we should do well, when upon our Knees, to fix our Eyes downward, that we may not be diverted by any Objects near us; at the same time resolving not to suffer them to gaze about, whereby they do but fetch in matter for wandring Thoughts. A farther help to this Attention, is great Silence; therefore we should never join aloud with the Minister but where it is enjoined, endeavouring to make the rest our own by a hearty *Amen*. The same care should be taken about those private Prayers we make at the Altar, which ought to be pronounced so softly, that they may not disturb the Devotion of our Fellow-Christians that are near us. We must particularly remember, not to repeat after the Minister what peculiarly relates

with reverence of Mind. 93

to his Office; which I mention the rather, because I have frequently observed some devout People following him that officiates, in the *Exhortation* and *Absolution*, as well as the *Confession*; which if thoroughly considered, must be judged a very absurd and improper Expression of the Peoples Devotion, because a distinguishing mark of the *Priest's* Office.

As to the *Reverence* of our *Minds*, it ought to consist in such *Intenseness* and *Application* of *Thought*, as may engage our Hearts as well as our Lips in this solemn Service; in such *Fervency* of *Affection*, and in such a Measure of *Importunity*, as may shew how desirous we are of the Mercy we request, and how highly we value and esteem what we ask for. To this end we ought with great Attention to accompany the *Man of God* that administers, throughout the whole Office, which is admirably framed and composed to express all those pious Dispositions and devout Affections, which well-prepared Minds ought to exercise upon such Occasions. Our *Repentance* in the *Confession* and *Absolution*; our *Charity* in relieving

94 *The manner of receiving, &c.*

our poor Brethren by a liberal Offering, in praying for all Conditions of Men, and in forgiving those that have offended us ; our *Humility* in acknowledging our own unworthiness ; our *Resolutions* of better *Obedience* in presenting our selves reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifices unto God ; our *Praises* and *Thanksgivings* in the Hymns and Devotions after the holy Communion. And when others are communicating we may enlarge our selves upon these Subjects, always taking care that our private Devotions give place to those that are publick, and that we lay aside our own Prayers, when the Minister calls upon us to joyn with him.

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WHEN the Sermon is ended, we should endeavour as soon as we can, to compose our selves for the devout Celebration of the *Christian Sacrifice*; and while the Minister is preparing himself to attend the holy Table before the Communion Office begins, that time may be well employed in imploring God's Grace to assist us in the right discharge of that holy Service we are about to perform.

*A PRAYER to prepare our Minds
for the devout Celebration of
the Holy Mysteries.*

ALmighty God, by whose great Bounty and infinite Goodness I have now an Opportunity offered

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me of approaching thy Altar, and of pleading before thee the prevailing Merits of the Death and Passion of thy Son Jesus Christ: I am sensible, O Lord, of my great Unworthiness to partake of this Christian Sacrifice; but the positive command of my Blessed Saviour, when he was about to lay down his Life for my sake, has made it absolutely necessary; and the many spiritual Wants I labour under, oblige me to apply to this Sovereign Remedy to repair those Breaches my sinful Follies have made in my Soul.

Assist me therefore, O Lord, with thy Holy Spirit in the Duty and Service I am about to perform; grant that nothing, during all the time of this holy Action, may make me forfeit that Reverence and Respect which I owe unto thy Divine Majesty, or that Attention which becomes the Celebration of these holy Mysteries. Touch me with such an
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awe of thy Presence as may fix my wandering Thoughts, compose my tumultuous Affections, stir up my flat and cold Desires, that I may feel the Power, and taste the Sweetness of this Divine Banquet.

That I may have such a Sense of my Saviour's Sufferings as may fill my Soul with Love and Gratitude towards him for those inestimable Benefits he has purchased for me ; that I may have such a sight of my Sins which occasioned all his Sorrows, as heartily to bewail and detest them. Such a Faith in that full perfect Oblation and Satisfaction made upon the Cross for the Sins of the World, that I may so importunately plead the Merit of it in this Commemoration of that Sacrifice, as to render thee gracious and propitious to me a miserable Sinner. Such a Conviction of my own Weakness and Insufficiency, as may procure thy gracious Aid and Assistance.

Such

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Such longing Desires of being made conformable to thy holy Will and Pleasure, as may transform me into thy Divine Image, and fix me to continue thy faithful Servant all the remaining Days of my Life.

I profess, O Lord, a firm and vigorous Resolution to resist all impertinent Thoughts or wicked Suggestions that may any ways oppose my holy purposes; I will never consent to them; my sincere Design is to offer thee a Sacrifice of Praise and Thanksgiving; to love and adore thee as the God of my Life, as my Portion which I have chose in the Land of the Living, and which I humbly beg may be my Happiness to all Eternity, thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour. *Amen.*

The Communion Service begins with some *Sentences* collected out of the Holy Scriptures proper for the Occasion; which do with great energy enforce the Duty of *Charity*, which we are called
upon

upon to exercise at this time. The Oblations of the Primitive Christians were upon such Occasions offered in such great abundance, that their *Clergy* were thereby liberally maintained, and all necessities provided for Divine Administrations, as well as for the Relief of the Poor; but now that a stated Maintenance is settled upon those that wait at the Altar, these Collections are particularly applied to the Support of the necessitous; not but that the Distribution belongs to the Minister, who may share in it himself if his wants require it. The Apostle advises, that these Collections be made 1 Cor. 16. 1, 2. every Lord's Day, and from his Authority the Church invites us to give Alms so often, whether there be a Communion or no; but this Apostolical Custom of weekly Collections is now generally omitted, and wholly laid aside. It would be well indeed, if a means could be found out to revive them, that such Oblations might accompany all our solemn Services upon the Lord's Day.

Till then we should be more liberal in the Performance of our Alms-deeds
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100 DEVOTIONS *for*

at the Altar, to which the following Sentences exhort us both from Command and Example; by shewing us how reasonable it is in it self, how acceptable to God, and how profitable to us both in this Life and the next; by representing to us the great Sin, as well as Danger of omitting it. They farther instruct us in the Objects that are to be supported by our Oblations, which are the Clergy, and all the Poor, especially Christians; in the measures of it, Liberality and Chearfulness; and lay down the End we ought to purpose to our selves, which is the Glory of God. All these Sentences are read by the Minister during the Collection, with such a pause generally between each Text, that the Communicants have leisure to make a short Meditation upon each of them, of which I shall give an Example for the Assistance of those that want such Helps.

1. *Let your Light so shine before Men, that they may see your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven, Mat. 5. 16.*

Grant,

Grant, O God, that I may set that Example of Charity to my Neighbour which thou requirest, that it may redound to thy Honour and Glory, from whom I receive the Power to do any thing that is good, and that by such visible Effects of thy Grace, my Neighbour may be attracted to know and love thee.

2. *Lay not up for your selves Treasures upon Earth, where the Moth and Rust doth corrupt, and where Thieves break through and steal; but lay up for your selves Treasures in Heaven, where neither Rust nor Moth doth corrupt, and where Thieves do not break through and steal, St. Mat. 6. 19, 20.*

I renounce, O Lord, all inordinate Affections to the things of this World, which are fading in their Nature, and liable to innumerable Accidents. I will fix my Mind upon the Enjoyments of thy Kingdom, which are everlasting, and prepare
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my self for them, by doing good to the Souls and Bodies of Men.

3. *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets, St. Mat. 7. 12.*

Let this Golden Rule, O Lord, govern all my Actions; let me relieve the Necessities of my Fellow-Christians, because I should expect Support if I were in their Circumstances: This is moreover the best Expression of my Love to him, wherein thou hast made so great a part of Religion to consist.

4. *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven, St. Mat. 7. 21.*

We are happy upon any terms, O Blessed Jesus, to be admitted into thy Kingdom; the belief of thy holy Doctrine shall appear in my Life and Conversation, and I will use all
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the means of Grace thou hast established, in order to purifie my corrupt Nature, and to enable me to do the Will of thy heavenly Father.

5. *Zaccheus stood forth and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have done any wrong to any Man, I restore fourfold, St. Luke 19. 8.*

I am resolved, O Lord, to perfect my Repentance, by restoring to the right Owner whatever I unjustly possess, by making satisfaction to those I have any ways wronged, and by shewing Mercy to the Poor, which will entitle me to thy Mercy, O Lord, when I stand most in need of it.

6. *Who goeth to warfare at any time at his own charge? who planteth a Vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? who feedeth a Flock, and eateth not of the milk of the Flock? 1 Cor. 9. 7.*

May thy Officers, O Lord, in their
spiritual

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spiritual warfare, be always supported, may the Husbandmen of thy Vineyard be plentifully rewarded, and may the Pastors of thy Flock receive abundant recompence for all their Care and Pains.

7. *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your worldly things?*
1 Cor. 9. 11.

Grant that I may always reverence thy Priests, because they have a peculiar Relation to thee; that I may sincerely love them, and cheerfully provide for their Maintenance, because of those great Benefits I receive from their Administrations.

8. *Do you not know, that they who minister about holy things, live of the Sacrifice, and they who wait at the Altar, are partakers with the Altar; even so hath the Lord ordained, that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel,* 1 Cor. 9. 13, 14.

Under the legal Dispensation thou
didst

didst particularly, O Lord, provide for thy *Holy ones*. Under the Gospel thou hast declared *Thy Labourers worthy of their Hire*. Let me religiously observe what thou hast ordained, that I may never deprive them of their just Rights by any Sacrilegious Encroachments, but be ready always to contribute to their comfortable Subsistence.

9. *He that soweth little, shall reap little, and he that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously: Let every one do according as he is disposed in his Heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a chearful giver,*
2 Cor. 9. 6, 7.

In my Distributions to thy Ministers and to the Poor Members of thy Body, let, O Lord, the willingness of my Mind, and the largeness of the Gift, recommend the Offering; that I may never confine myself to the narrowest measures, but rather exercise Self-denial in order
to

106 DEVOTIONS for

to relieve them; for thy Bounty, which suffers not the least Service to lose its reward, will more abundantly recompence our larger Charities.

10. *Let him that is taught in the Word, minister unto him that teacheth in all good things: Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a Man soweth, that shall he reap, Gal. 6. 6, 7.*

Thou hast, O Lord, rejoiced the heart of thy Servant, with the knowledge of thy heavenly Truth; as I desire to render praise to thy Goodness for this great Blessing, so I desire to be thankful to the Instruments of this thy favour, that their Lives may be made easie and comfortable, whom thou hast ordained for Men in things pertaining to thy self.

11. *While we have time, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith, Gal. 6. 10.*

Make

Make me, O Lord, ready to embrace all Occasions of doing good to all Men, because they are thy Creatures; but let the Members of the same Body, all necessitous Christians particularly, share in my Beneficence; for they are the peculiar Objects of thy Mercy and Tendernefs.

12. *Godlinefs is great Riches, if a man be content with that he hath; for we brought nothing into the world, neither may we carry any thing out,*
1 Tim. 6. 6, 7.

Our Happinefs, O Lord, confifts not in our Abundance, but in the difcharge of a good Confcience towards God and Man, and in Submission to thy holy Will. Let that be my care which will laft for ever, and not the perifhing things of this Life, which Death will certainly ftrip me of.

13. *Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to diftribute; laying up in ftore for themfelves a good*
4 foundation

108 DEVOTIONS for

foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal Life, 2 Tim. 6. 17, 18, 19.

O my God, as I enjoy large effects of thy Bounty, so grant that I may rejoice the heart of my poor Neighbours, by a plentiful distribution; this will make my Wealth a true Blessing in this World, and through thy infinite Mercy secure the Happiness of the next.

14. God is not unrighteous, that he will forget your works and labour that proceedeth of Love, which Love you have shewed for his Name sake who have ministered unto the Saints, and yet do minister, Heb. 6. 10.

There is no Merit in our best Works, O Lord, but we hope for a Reward from thy Goodness which hath promised, and from thy Truth which will perform it. Let but Love animate our Offerings, and we are assured thou wilt cast a favourable Eye towards them.

15. *To do good, and to distribute, forget not, for with such Sacrifices God is well pleased, Heb. 13. 16.*

Do I know Sacrifices, O my God, that will please thee, and shall I not offer them? Oh how happy dost thou make thy poor Creatures, in putting it into their Power to do any thing that is acceptable to thee! I will readily catch at every Opportunity of doing good to the Souls and Bodies of Men, for therein is thy delight.

16. *Whoso hath this world's goods, and seeth his Brother have need, and shutteth up his Bowels from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him?*

1 St. John 3. 17.

In vain I pretend to love thee, O my God, if my necessitous Brother finds not the effects of it. Thy Providence has made him the Object of my Charity, and thou hast thereby consulted my greater good, in giving me thereby an Occasion to testify the truth of my Love towards thee.

F

17. Give

110 DEVOTIONS for

17. *Give Alms of thy Goods, and never turn thy Face from any poor Man, and then the Face of the Lord shall not be turned from thee, Tobit 4. 7.*

I am undone, O Lord, except thou lookest upon me with an Eye of Mercy; therefore I will regard the Cry of the Poor, because the Merciful shall obtain Mercy.

18. *Be merciful after thy power; if thou hast much, give plenteously; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little; for so gatherest thou a good reward in the day of necessity, Tob. 4. 8, 9.*

'Tis fit, O Lord, that thou who givest me all, should'st be acknowledged with a proportionable share; and yet so great is thy Goodness, that thou rewardest the small returns we are able to make with comfort and support in the day of necessity, and in the hour of death.

19. *He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth*

the ALTAR. IIII

*lendeth to the Lord ; and look what
he layeth out , it shall be paid him
again, Prov. 19. 17.*

What hast thou not done, O Lord,
to provoke me to good works ; thou
condescendest to be a Debtor to thine
own Creatures, and I should be just-
ly counted worse than a Brute, could
I refuse to lend upon such advanta-
geous terms.

20. *Blessed is the Man that pro-
videth for the Sick and Needy, the
Lord shall deliver him in the time of
Trouble, Psal. 41. 1.*

'Tis thy Blessing, O Lord, alone
that can make us happy ; let me ne-
ver be so much wanting to my self,
as to neglect those means thou hast
prescribed in order to attain it.

While the Minister reads these Ex-
hortations to Charity, the Communi-
cants make their Offerings, which
ought to be done with a short Prayer
for God's Acceptance.

112 DEVOTIONS *for*

A PRAYER when we offer our Alms.

I Acknowledge, O Lord, that all I possess is the effect of thy Bounty ; it is from thee I have received it, and to thy Holy Name be the Glory. Accept of this Free-will Offering of my Hands, as a Testimony of thy Right to all I enjoy, and as an Exercise of that Love and Charity to my necessitous Brethren, which thou requirest, and art pleased to take as done to thy self. O my God, I am resolved to prefer my Duty before any temporal Satisfaction, because thy Favour is better than Life ; I will dedicate a part of those good things thou hast bestowed upon me to relieve the Poor, because thou hast made it an Evidence of my Love to thee. And grant that all my Alms-deeds may be perform'd with such Purity and Inten-

son of Mind, and with such a Proportion to what thou hast given me, that they may be acceptable in thy sight, thro' the Merits of Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. *Amen.*

When the *Offertory* is finished, the *Priest* desires God to accept of our Alms, and of those Oblations of Bread and Wine which he is now about to consecrate, whereby they may become to us the Body and Blood of Christ; in which we are to join with the greater Fervour, because we are so particularly concerned in the Acceptance of the Holy Gifts. And at this time it is that we exercise another sort of Charity, by offering up our Intercessions for the Church Militant, for all Estates and Conditions of Men, that God would be pleased to hear us for them, by virtue of the Sacrifice of his Son which we are about to commemorate. And we now thank God for all his Servants departed this Life in his Faith and Fear, because it is by virtue of the same Sacrifice they will obtain their perfect Consummation and Bliss. How conformable this is to the Practice of the Ancient Church, is well

114 DEVOTIONS *for*

known to those who are skilled in Ecclesiastical History.

While the *Priest* says the *Exhortation* and the *Invitation*, we should stand with great Reverence, and attend to those Advantages which he declares to be the Portion of worthy Communicants, and comfort our selves with our pious Resolutions against the Dangers those incur that receive unworthily; and at the same time look inward upon our selves, to see how far we come up to the Qualifications of those that are invited to draw nigh, and to receive with Comfort.

We must make our *Confession*, which follows next, in the humblest Posture of kneeling, repeating the Words after the Minister with great Sorrow of Heart for the many heinous Offences we have been guilty of, and must be sure that the inward Sense of our Minds answer the Propriety of those Expressions which the Church puts into our Mouths, that while we draw near unto God with our Lips, our Hearts may not be far from him.

When the *Absolution* is pronounced, we must keep our selves in great Silence; and in an humble Posture, while

we

we are receiving so great a Blessing. For here we must not repeat the Words after the Minister, because it is a peculiar part of the Priestly Office to absolve. It is in some Places the Custom to pronounce an *Amen* in a low tone, after every Sentence of the Absolution; however we must be sure at the end of it, to offer up an hearty *Amen*, that God would be pleased to confirm in Heaven what he has given his Ministers Authority to pronounce on Earth.

After the *Absolution*, the Church has provided us with some choice Portions of Scripture, to beget in us a lively Faith and firm Persuasion of God's Mercy and Forgiveness towards penitent Sinners, to the end that their Hopes may be revived, and that the Comfort of the Absolution may be confirmed to them.

They are generally read with so great a Pause between them, that the Communicants may have leisure to make some short Reflections upon them, which may be done in the following manner.

Come unto me all that travel and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you, St. Mat. 11. 28.

116 DEVOTIONS for

In Obedience to thy Call, O Blessed Jesus, I approach unto thee! I must confess the Sense of my many and great Follies oppress me and cover me with Confusion; but thy Pardon and Forgiveness will restore Joy and Gladness to my Soul.

So God loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all that believe in him should not perish but have everlasting Life, St. John 3. 16.

No greater Evidence of thy Love, O Lord, can be desired than the Sacrifice of thy Son; O! qualifie my Soul to receive the Benefit of it by a firm and immoveable Faith in the Merit of his Death, that I may escape those Punishments my Sins deserve, and obtain that Salvation thou hast graciously promised.

This is a true Saying, and worthy of all Men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, 1 Tim. 1. 15.

A most blessed and joyful Truth,
which

which I will firmly believe, because revealed from above. Thou, O Blessed Jesus, wert made manifest to destroy the Works of the Devil, and to release me from the Punishment due to my Sins ; let my true Repentance make me a fit Object of thy Mercy, and then, even my Sins shall not deprive me of the Hopes of thy Favour.

If any Man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins, 1 St. John 2. 1.

Blessed God ! who hast not left us without a Remedy, when our spiritual Enemies prevail against us ; I will not despair of thy Mercy, since the immaculate Jesus intercedes for me : Let the Merit of his Sufferings plead for the Acceptance of my penitential Sorrow, and convey to me Strength and Power to serve thee better for the time to come.

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We have been hitherto employed in hearing our Duty, exercising our Charity, professing our Repentance, and strengthening our Faith in the Goodness of God. We are now called upon to praise him, and to *lift up our Hearts to him*: which made so constant a part of this solemn Service, that all the ancient Liturgies agree in this Form, which our Church retains. And indeed when our Consciences are eased by *Repentance*, and quieted by *Pardon*, we have great reason joyfully to acknowledge the Bounty of our Benefactor. And this *Exhortation* had not only a respect to the Duty of Praise, but seems to require the dismissing of all worldly Thoughts, that we may the better fix our Minds upon the Holy Mysteries. It is the Christians *Hoc age*, that calls them to attend with great Seriousness and Devotion upon the solemn Service they are engaged in; and therefore we must take care, when we declare with our Lips, that *we lift up our Hearts to the Lord*, that we be sincere in our Profession. Then follows the *Address*, which consists in an acknowledgment of our own unworthiness

thinefs to approach God's Table, and in imploring his Divine Affiftance. After this comes the Prayer of *Consecration*, the moft ancient and effential part of this Euchariftical Worftip, becaufe it is by the *Prayer* and *Authority* of God's lawful Minifter, that the *Offerings* of *Bread* and *Wine* become to us *Symbols* of the *Body* and *Blood* of Chrift. We ought now with great Devotion to join in thofe Petitions the Prieft offers up, to the end that the Elements of Bread and Wine may be enervigored with the Divine Virtue of Chrift's Body and Blood. We fhould attend to the Actions of breaking the Bread, and pouring out the Wine, with proper Meditations; and when the Consecration is finifhed, it will be very fit to exprefs our Admiration and Thankfulnefs for the Divine Nourifhment provided for us.

A PRAYER immediately after Consecration.

A CCEPT, O Eternal God, of that Representation we make before thee of that All-fufficient Sa-
F 6 crifice

120 DEVOTIONS *for*

crifice which thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ made upon the Cross : Let the Merit of it plead effectually for the Pardon and Forgiveness of all my Sins, and render thee favourable and propitious to me, a miserable Sinner ; Let the Power of it prevail against all the Powers of Darknes ; Let the Wisdom of it make me wise unto Salvation, and let the Peace of it reconcile me to thee, and bring to me Peace of Conscience.

I adore thee, O Blessed Jesus, my Redeemer, who didst endure the painful and shameful Death of the Cross, to recover me from a State of Sin and Misery ; I admire thine infinite Condescension, who wert pleased to be made miserable, that I might be made happy ; poor, that I might be enriched ; and didst die, that I might live for ever. With all my Soul, O dear Jesus, I love and praise thee for these stupendous Expressions of thy
Bounty

Bounty and Goodness towards me ;
O Lamb of God, that takest away
the Sins of the World, have Mercy
upon me ; O Lamb of God, that
takest away the Sins of the World,
grant me thy Peace. *Amen, Lord
Jesus, Amen.*

*A PRAYER before Receiving
the Consecrated Bread.*

*Consisting of Confession, and imploring
Pardon.*

I.

ALmighty and Everlasting God,
I desire to humble my self be-
fore thee, under the Sense of those
many and heinous Sins which I have
been guilty of against thy Divine Ma-
jesty, in Thought, Word, and Deed.

I confess with Sorrow and Con-
fusion of Face, that I have too of-
ten neglected the Duties of Religi-
on, which is the great and impor-
tant

120 DEVOTIONS *for*

crifice which thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ made upon the Cross: Let the Merit of it plead effectually for the Pardon and Forgiveness of all my Sins, and render thee favourable and propitious to me, a miserable Sinner; Let the Power of it prevail against all the Powers of Darknes; Let the Wisdom of it make me wise unto Salvation, and let the Peace of it reconcile me to thee, and bring to me Peace of Conscience.

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fusion of Face, that I have too of-
ten neglected the Duties of Religi-
on, which is the great and impor-
tant

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tant Concern of my Life ; and when I have performed them , I have not excercised that Fervour of Spirit , that Intenseness of Mind , which such holy Services require from me.

I have not been sufficiently thankful for the continued effects of thy Goodness and Bounty towards me ; neither have I received the afflicting Dispensations of thy Providence with that Patience and Submission which is due to that infinite Wisdom from whence they proceed.

I have not preserved such a Sense of my Follies and Infirmities , as ought to have inspired a mean and low Opinion of my self , and to have made me ready to condescend to the lowest Offices for the Service of my fellow Christians.

I have not set a sufficient Guard upon my Senses , so that my Eyes and Ears have been instrumental in defiling and polluting my Soul ; and even the Comforts and Conveniencies

inconveniences of Life have been made a Snare, by indulging Pleasure more than that End and Design for which they were bestowed.

I have had a greater regard to the Fashion and Custom of the World, than to that Sincerity which thou requirest in all my Conversation.

I have too often impaired the Credit and Reputation of my Neighbour, by discovering his Faults and Infirmities, and have too easily listened to those Slanders against him which bad Men have suggested.

I have not embraced all those Occasions thou hast offered me, of doing good to the Souls and Bodies of my Fellow Christians, neither have I discharged with due Care those relative Offices in the Station wherein thy Providence has placed me.

II.

I am astonished, O Lord, at my foolish Rashness, when I reflect upon
that

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that Dread Majesty which I have provoked :

I detest and abhor my Ingratitude, when I consider the infinite Kindness of that bountiful Father which I have offended ;

I condemn and accuse my unaccountable Stupidity, when I recollect that miserable Slavery and Bondage which I have preferred before the perfect Freedom of thy Service.

I abhor my self in Dust and Ashes ; and if thou, O Lord, hadst dealt with me according to my deserving , instead of approaching thy Altar with hopes of Acceptance, I might have been spending a sad Eternity, under remediless Pains and Misery.

But there is Forgiveness with thee, that thou may'st be feared ; and thou hast declared thy Mercy above all thy Works.

The inestimable Sacrifice of thy Son, which thou hast provided for us, sufficiently assures me of thy
readiness

readiness to admit me to terms of Peace and Reconciliation.

Oh let thy infinite Mercy and Compassion receive me in the Quality of a penitent Supplicant, whom thy great Patience has born with as a Sinner.

I am heartily sorry I have offended thee ; I detest my Sins, because they are displeasing to thee, who art infinite Goodness.

I am resolved , by the Assistance of thy Grace, to return no more to Folly, to avoid all occasions of Evil, and to live better for the time to come.

I intreat thee therefore, by the Merit of thy Son's Blood , the Price of my Redemption, that thou wouldst be pleased to release me from the Guilt of all my Sins :

Let that immaculate and pure Sacrifice, which he offered upon the Cross, and which by thy good Providence I now commemorate, be
effectual

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effectual for my Pardon and Forgiveness,

I know my many and great Sins are just matter of Fear and Dejection of Spirit, but I will hope in thy Mercies which are boundless and infinite.

The Sense of my own unworthiness would sink me into Despair, did I not reflect upon thine infinite Goodness, and that precious Blood which was shed to purchase Redemption for me.

III.

Thus supported, O Lord, I approach this Christian Sacrifice ;

I come as a sick Man to the great Physician of Life, I beseech thee, O Lord, to cure my Infirmities ;

I come as a polluted Wretch to the Fountain of Mercy, wash away, I intreat thee, all my Uncleanness :

I come as a returning prodigal Child to his tender and compassionate Father, O receive me, and relieve

lieve me, and revive me by thy Favour.

I come as a blind Man to the Source of eternal Brightness, do thou, O Lord, enlighten my Dark-ness, that I may behold the wondrous things of thy Law.

I come as a poor frail Creature to the great Lord of Heaven and Earth, supply my Wants, and do abundantly more for me than I am able to ask or think.

Let me not only receive the outward and visible Signs, but the inward and spiritual Grace, the Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ ;

That so all carnal Affections may die in me, and that all things belonging to the Spirit may live and grow in me ;

That I may have Power and Strength to have Victory, and to triumph against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil :

And also may be endued with all
such

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such heavenly Vertues, which are pleasing to thee, and which thou wilt eternally reward, for the Merit of thy Son's Death, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, World without end. *Amen.*

*Another PRAYER before receiuing
the Consecrated Bread.*

*Consisting of Petitions for the Virtues
of a Christian Life.*

I.

MOST merciful and gracious God, who of thy great Goodness didst give thy Son Jesus Christ to take upon him our Nature, and to humble himself to Death, even the Death of the Crofs ;

I beseech thee by his infinite Condescension, by his perfect Obedience, and by his meritorious Sufferings ; not only to pardon my past Sins,
but

but to endue me with Power and Strength to resist them for the time to come.

Let the Virtue of these holy Mysteries replenish me with such supernatural Gifts and Graces of thy Holy Spirit, as may enable me not only to act conformable to the Light of my own Mind, but may make me readily obey thy heavenly Motions, and constantly follow the Suggestions of thy Holy Inspiration.

Give me a *zealous Sense* of Piety towards thee my gracious Lord and Sovereign, and to all thy sacred and divine Mysteries.

Let me reverence thy Word and Worship, and all Things and Persons dedicated and devoted to thy peculiar Service.

Let me submit to all the Afflictions thou shalt think fit to lay upon me with Patience and with Meekness.

Let me trust to thy Providence to supply me under all Dangers and Necessities ;

And

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And let me thankfully acknowledge thy Bounty in all those good things which thou so freely hast bestowed upon me.

II.

Give me, O Lord, that *divine Wisdom* which proposes the pleasing thee, as the End and Aim of all my Actions, and which directs to all those means which thou hast graciously established for the working out my Salvation;

That my precious time may not be employed in hunting after Trifles, that my natural Talents may not be buried and drowned in brutish Sensuality, that my Study may not be Vanity, nor my Labour Folly;

But that framing a right Judgment in all things, I may fix my Mind upon those Pleasures which are at thy right Hand, which are permanent and durable;

And that the great Care and Business of my Life may be to obtain thy Favour, who art the sovereign

Good

Good of my Soul, and the satisfying Center of all my Desires.

To this end inure me to spiritual Objects by constant and fervent Prayer, by entertaining my Thoughts with pious Meditations, by reading and hearing thy Holy Word with Reverence and Attention, and by frequently approaching thy Altars with Humility and Devotion.

And above all, let a constant Fear of offending my good God put me upon my Guard, and make me watchful amidst those imminent Dangers that surround me in this my Pilgrimage on Earth.

Thou, O Lord, who resistest the Proud, and givest Grace to the Lowly, endue me with the Vertue of *true Humility*, the Model of which thy only Son traced out for the Practice of the Faithful;

That I may have a just Sense of all my Weaknesses and Follies, and may readily submit to the meanest Offices

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Offices for the Welfare and Benefit
of my Fellow Christians ;

That I may restrain all immoderate Desires of Honour, by doing nothing thro' Strife or Vain-Glory,

And that I may never exalt myself upon the account of any Advantage I enjoy of Body or Mind above others, by remembering that it is not the effect of my Merit, but of thy infinite Goodness and distinguishing Mercy.

O! deliver me from the Slavery and Dominion of Pride, which threw Angels from Heaven, and drove Man out of Paradise, which produces so much Evil and Torments wherever it resides, and which, above all, is so hateful in thy sight.

III.

Grant, O Lord, that I may *love* thee above all things, who art infinitely perfect in thy own Nature ;

That I may desire thee above all things, who art full of Mercy and
Compassion

Compassion towards the Children of Men:

Whom is there in Heaven but thee? and whom upon Earth that I can desire in Comparison of thee? As the Hart thirsteth after the Water-Brooks, so let my Soul long after thee, O God.

Let the Allurements of the World, and the Enjoyments of Sense appear as trifling Entertainments, in comparison of the Pleasure and Happiness of serving thee and doing good.

Let the Difficulties and Dangers which I meet with in the way of my Duty, be so far from discouraging me, that they may raise my Spirits, increase my Resolution, and serve only to make the Pleasure of loving thee more intense and perfect.

Let the divine Flame of thy Love burn so bright in my Soul, that it may free my Mind from all vile Affections, and influence all my Actions with a careful observance of thy

G Holy

134 DEVOTIONS *for*

Holy Laws, and farther evidence its Sincerity by diligently consulting the Temporal and Spiritual Happiness of my Neighbour.

O! let it suppress all the bitter Effects of Envy, that I may compassionate his Misfortunes, and rejoice in all the good things thou art pleased to bestow upon him ;

That I may be tender of his Reputation, and never expose it by rash Censures, nor diminish it by the relation of his real Infirmities ;

That I may guard my Heart from secretly repining at his Prosperity, or triumphing in his Calamity ;

That I may set a Watch upon the Door of my Lips, that I may speak no Evil concerning him, nor utter any Words of Detraction.

That it may quiet and appease the furious boiling of Anger in my Mind, by making me patient and meek under all Provocations, by disposing me to forgive Offences and

to return Silence to all injurious Treatment.

That it may conquer worldly Sorrow which worketh Death, by a comfortable Expectation of future Happiness:

That it may expel Malice by doing good, that it may strengthen my Weakness by Fortitude, cure my Despair by Hope, my Listlessness by spiritual Exercises,

And restrain the Wandrings of my Mind towards unlawful things, by being stedfast and unmoveable in the Work of the Lord.

IV.

Give me, O Lord, a *sober Abstinence*, that I may know how to abound and how to want:

That my fleshly Appetites may be kept under strict Government, since the indulging of them by our first Parents brought Death into the World:

That they may always observe
G 2 their

136 DEVOTIONS *for*

their due bounds by administering to the Necessities of Life, and never support and encourage Luxury, which is boundless and infinite, which brings forth Scurrility and Immodesty, which depresses the Soul, and renders it unapt for spiritual Enjoyments.

Make me so mindful of that strict Account I must give of all my Actions at the dreadful Tribunal Seat, that it may mortifie all Inclinations, and Temptations, to sinful Pleasures.

And stir me up to Zeal and Diligence in performing all those things which are acceptable in thy sight.

In order to attain these blessed Ends, O Lord, I approach to thy Holy Table, that I may grow in Grace, and may be enabled to imitate the suffering Virtues of the crucified Jesus.

Grant therefore, most merciful God, that the receiving the Symbols of his Body and Blood, which

the ALTAR. 137

I am about to partake of, may by the Grace and Efficacy of his Spirit, conform me to his divine Image; and make me stedfast in serving thee, till thou takest me finally to enjoy thee, through Jesus Christ my Blessed Saviour and Redeemer. *Amen.*

The foregoing Prayers may be used in our Pews before we go up to the Communion Table. When the Communicants are but few, and we have not time to enlarge our Devotions, we may comprehend the devout affections of a worthy Receiver in the following shorter Prayer.

*A PRAYER before Receiving the
Consecrated Elements.*

MOST gracious God, who of thy infinite Mercy hast given thy Son Jesus Christ to be our great High-Priest, and the Bishop of our Souls, who did offer up him-
G 3 self

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self to thee a pure and immaculate Sacrifice upon the Cross for us miserable Sinners, who has given us his Flesh to eat and his Blood to drink, in a mystical manner; and hast assured us by thy Holy Spirit, that as often as we eat that Bread, and drink that Cup, we shew forth the Lord's Death till his coming again.

I humbly beseech thee therefore by the Merits of his Blood, the great Price of our Redemption;

I intreat thee by his wonderful and ineffable Charity, wherewith he has vouchsafed to love us unworthy Creatures, at so great a rate, that thou would'st be pleased to wash me in his Blood from all my Sins, which make me unworthy to partake of these holy Mysteries:

Let my Repentance be hearty and sincere, and express it self in all the Circumstances of holy Obedience for the time to come;

Thou

Thou alone out of an unclean thing canst bring a clean, of a wretched Sinner make me therefore holy and righteous.

Thou art the Fountain of Mercy, shut not up thy Bowels of Compassion towards me.

Thou art the great Physician of Souls, display thy Power in my Health and Recovery.

Let me approach thy Holy Table with Reverence and Devotion, that no vile Affections may hinder me from receiving the Benefits of this divine Nourishment.

Let me celebrate this Christian Sacrifice with Purity of Heart, and a right intention of Mind, that I may obtain all those Advantages for which thou wert graciously pleased to establish it.

Let me entirely resign my Soul and Body to be a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto thee ; for thou hast the justest Claim to me,

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since the Blessed Jesus has purchased me at the Price of his own Blood.

Grant, O Lord, that I may constantly endeavour to make some Proficiency in all the Virtues of the Christian Life; because the Blessed Jesus has obtained for me, by the Merits of his Sufferings, the Grace and Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, to work in me both to will and to do thy good Pleasure.

Make me ready to be reconciled to all those that have offended me, because when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son:

Let me embrace all my poor Brethren with sincere Love and Charity, and contribute all I can to the relief of Christ's distressed Members, because he thought not his Life too dear, nor his Blood too precious to redeem me from a State of Bondage and Slavery.

Strengthen

Strengthen me, O Lord, in such a manner by this spiritual Food, that I may successfully encounter all the Attacks of my spiritual Enemies ;

Suppress in me the Spirit of Pride and vain Glory, of Envy and Detraction, of Uncleanneſs and Intemperance, or of any Diſtruſt and Diffidence of thy Mercy ;

May all Temptations to theſe Offences againſt thy Holy Laws be overcome by that Power which thou ſhalt be pleaſed to communicate to me in this Holy Sacrament ;

And may all thoſe Evils which the Craft and Subtilty of the Devil, or Man worketh againſt me, be brought to nought :

That, being outwardly and inwardly fortified by the Aſſiſtance of thy Grace, I may preſs towards the Mark for the Prize of the High Calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus ; when I ſhall enjoy thee no longer

130 DEVOTIONS *for*

in Mystery, which is our Lot and Portion here below, but see thee Face to Face, and be eternally satisfied with the Pleasures of thy Kingdom, in and through the Merits of Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Advocate. *Amen.*

When the Priest approaches to deliver the Consecrated Bread.

Come, O Lord! and make no long tarrying, O my God!

I am not worthy thou should'st enter under my Roof; but, Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner.

I long for thy Salvation, O! satisfy me with thy Likeness,

I open my Heart to thee, O! come unto me, and abide with me, and powerfully support me in all Trials and Temptations, when I most need thy Help. *Amen.*

A PRAYER

*A PRAYER after Receivng the
Consecrated Bread.*

Blessed be thy Holy Name, O Lord Jesus, for this thy inestimable Gift, for this Comfort thou hast left me in this Vale of Tears.

As long as I live will I praise thee; as long as I have any being, I will most thankfully acknowledge this thy Bounty and Goodness to the Children of Men.

Thou hast given me thy precious Body to be the Food of my Soul, behold I offer to thee my Body and Soul, make them fit for thy Service.

Let this divine Food repair in me what ever has been decay'd by the Lusts of the Flesh or the Wiles of Satan.

That my Understanding may be exercised in the Knowledge of Thee, and the Contemplation of thy divine Truths, which are alone able to

144 DEVOTIONS *for*

make me wise unto Salvation;

That my Will may chuse and desire thee above all things, who art the chiefest Good, the most desirable Portion of immortal Souls;

That my Affections may be entirely fixed on thee, who art only amiable, and the Centre of Eternal Satisfaction.

I will love thee, O Lord, because thou art infinitely Good, and thy Mercy endureth for ever.

I will love thee, O Lord, because thou didst create me after thy own Image, capable of loving thee, and enjoying thee eternally.

I will love thee, O Lord, because when I had lost and undone my self, thou didst die to redeem me.

I will love thee, O Lord, because thou art only worthy of my Love, thou only canst fill and satisfy my Soul.

Be thou therefore my Hope and Confidence, and let all my trust be placed in thee.

Be

Be thou my Riches and Delight,
and let all my Joy and Contentment
rest in thee.

Be thou my Peace and Refuge,
and let my Pleasure and Safety de-
pend on thee.

Be thou my Portion and greatest
Treasure, and let my Eternal Hap-
piness be fixt in the Enjoyment of
thee. *Amen, Lord Jesus, Amen.*

*When the Priest Approaches to
deliver the Consecrated Wine.*

I Will receive the Cup of Salvation,
and call upon the Name of the
Lord.

I will ratifie my Vows with this
Blood of the New Covenant, and
engage my self, O God, to be eter-
nally thine.

Satisfie my thirsty Soul with good
things, and let this Communion of
the Blood of Christ put more Glad-
ness

134 DEVOTIONS *for*

ness into my Heart, than Wine and Oil when they increase. *Amen.*

A PRAYER after Receiving the Consecrated Wine.

Blessing and Honour, Glory and Power be unto him that sitteth on the Throne, and unto the Lamb that was slain, for ever and ever.

I give thee most humble and hearty Thanks, O Lord, from the bottom of my Soul, that thou hast been pleased to admit me at this time to the Participation of these holy and desirable Mysteries;

That thou hast vouchsafed to feed me a Sinner, thy unworthy Servant, with the spiritual Nourishment of the Body and Blood of thy Son Jesus Christ; and this not for any Merits of my own, but for the sake of thy infinite Goodness and Mercy.

Unworthy though I am, yet thy Bounty, O Lord, never fails; the
Love

Love of my Saviour is not diminished, and the Virtue of his Propitiation is never exhausted.

Grant therefore, I beseech thee, that this Holy Sacrament may never turn to my Judgment and Condemnation;

But that it may be Health and Recovery under all my Weaknesses and Infirmities;

Safety and Defence against all the Attacks of my Spiritual Enemies;

Vigour and Strength to all my holy Purposes and Resolutions;

Comfort and support under all the Afflictions and Calamities of Life;

Assistance and Direction under all Difficulties and Doubts;

Courage and Constancy under all Dangers and Persecutions, especially in times of Sicknefs, and at the hour of Death.

Finally, let it procure for me Pardon and Forgiveness in this Life, Mercy and Favour at the Day of Judg-

148 DEVOTIONS for

Judgment, and a never-fading Crown of Glory in thy heavenly Kingdom, where with thy Son Jesus Christ, and the Blessed Spirit, thou livest and reignest, one God, World without end. *Amen.*

Having finished those Devotions that relate to our selves, this is a proper season to be mindful of the Wants and Necessities of our Brethren, and we cannot better exercise our Charity, than by recommending the whole state of Mankind to the Mercy and Goodness of God, and by interceding with him by the Virtue of this Christian Sacrifice, for a supply of whatever they shall stand in need of. Such Intercessions always made a part of the publick Liturgies of the ancient Church, as is well known to those that are conversant in Antiquity, and no part of the Prayers, exceeded more in length than that which related to this Subject; so that we cannot do better, than to follow the ancient Model for our direction in this particular.

A PRAYER

*A PRAYER for the whole State
of Mankind.*

A CCEPT, O Lord, of my Prayers and Intercessions, as a Testimony of my Charity, for the whole Race of Mankind, and let the Virtue and Efficacy of this Christian Sacrifice procure for them Comfort and Relief in all those Wants and Necessities they labour under.

Enlighten the dark Corners of the Earth with the bright Sunshine of thy glorious Gospel, and succeed the pious Designs of all those that endeavour the Propagation of the Kingdom of thy Son; that thy Way may be known upon Earth, and thy Saving Health among all Nations.

Let thy continual Pity cleanse and defend thy Church; and for as much as it cannot continue in Safety without thy succour, preserve it evermore by thy Help and Goodness.

Endue

138 DEVOTIONS *for*

Endue the Governours and Pastors of it with Courage and Resolution to preserve those sacred Rights thou hast committed to their Trust, with Zeal and Diligence in promoting solid and substantial Piety, and with a conscientious Discharge of all the important Duties of their Holy Function.

Let all secular Magistrates study to govern their People with Truth and Justice, and to preserve them in Wealth, Peace and Godliness.

Bless our Sovereign, and all the Royal Family, with the Dew of thy Heavenly Spirit, that they, ever trusting in thy Goodness, protected by thy Power, and crowned with thy gracious and endless Favour, may continue before thee, in Health, Peace, Joy and Honour, a long and happy Life upon Earth, and after Death obtain everlasting Life and Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Let War and Bloodshed cease among

mong Christian Princes, and give to all Nations Unity, Peace, and Concord.

Bless all the People of this Land with Health, Peace and Plenty; and teach them to use such thy Blessings with Sobriety, Gratitude and Charity.

Make all Christians sincerely to practise that Religion they profess, and inspire them with such uniting Principles, and Charitable Hearts, that they may love one another, and thereby convince the World that they are thy Disciples.

Be merciful to all my Friends, Relations and Acquaintance; those that are in Sin, convert them; those that are in Grace, confirm and strengthen them; those that are in Adversity, comfort and support them; and those that are in Prosperity, suffer them not to forget thee.

Forgive all my Enemies, make them easie and ready to be reconciled,

152 DEVOTIONS *for*

led, and give them Repentance and better Minds.

Be gracious to all that are in Affliction and Distress, that labour under the Straights of Poverty, that suffer Persecution for the Testimony of a good Conscience, that mourn under Captivity or Banishment, or any unjust Oppression;

That are exercised with bodily Pains and Diseases, that are solicited with strong Temptations, or are dejected with Terrors and Troubles of Mind.

Pity and relieve their several Necessities, give them Patience under all their Sufferings, and in thy due time deliver them, according to thy great Mercy.

Assist those that are at the point of Death; and when their Strength fails, let not their Faith fail; even in Death, enable them to trust in thee.

Shed thy particular Grace and Benediction upon all those who are
Partakers

Partakers of the Holy Communion
this Day,

That they may persevere in all
their holy Purposes and Resolutions,
and may conform themselves to the
Model of their crucified Saviour;

That the Pattern of his Piety and
Devotion, of his Humility and Cha-
rity, of his Meekness and patient
Suffering, may be so lively imprin-
ted upon our Minds, that we may
transcribe his Example in our Lives
and Conversations:

That thus Commemorating his
All-sufficient Sacrifice upon Earth,
we may receive the everlasting Be-
nefit of it in thy Heavenly Kingdom,
and bless and praise thee for it to
all Eternity. *Amen.*

We cannot better conclude our De-
votions, if Time and Opportunity will
permit, than by offering up our Praises
and Thanksgivings for all those Mercies
and Blessings God hath bestowed upon
us all along in Life, particularly for his
inesti-

142 DEVOTIONS for

inestimable Love in the Redemption of the World by our Lord Jesus Christ; and what Heart that is warm with a true Sense of what his Saviour has done and suffered for him, can refuse the humble Tribute of a most grateful Acknowledgement?

A Thanksgiving for God's Mercies, Temporal and Spiritual.

PRaise the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise his Holy Name. Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and forget not all his Benefits.

Thou, O Lord, art alone Infinite in all Excellencies and Perfections, and therefore thou only art the Eternal Object of the Adorations and Praises of all thy Creatures.

I desire to praise and worship thee with all the Heavenly Host, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Heaven and Earth, thou hast created all things, and for thy Pleasure they are and were created.

All Praise and Thanksgiving be rendered unto thee, for making me after thy own Image and Likeness, capable of loving thee, and enjoying thee eternally.

I bless thee for the Light of my Reason, and all other Endowments and Faculties of my Soul and Body.

I bless thee for preserving me from innumerable Accidents and Dangers, through the whole Course of my Life: for all my known and unobserved Deliverances, and for the Guard thy Holy Angels have kept over me.

I bless thee for the Advantages of a pious Education, and for seasoning my tender Mind with early notices of Virtue and Religion;

I bless thee for recovering me to a Sense of my Duty, when I foolishly strayed from the Fountain of all Happiness; and for thy unwearied Patience towards me, after so many and so great Provocations.

I bless

156 DEVOTIONS *for*

I bless thee for all the Comforts and Accommodations of Life which thou hast bestowed upon me, whereby my Pilgrimage in this World has been softned and supported;

And I adore thy wise Providence in all those Afflictions and Disappointments with which thou hast thought fit to exercise me, and which have brought me to that sense of thee and of my self, which 'tis likely nothing else would have done.

By thee I have been holden up from the Womb, my Praise shall continually be of thee.

Above all, I praise and magnifie thy holy Name for thy inexpressible Love to lost Man,

For sending thy Son into the World to redeem us from a State of Sin and Misery, by suffering for us, and dying in our stead, that we might be partakers of the divine Nature, and receive the Promises of eternal Life;

And

And for his instituting and ordaining Holy Mysteries as Pledges of his Love, and for a continual remembrance of his Death to our great and endless Comfort.

As long as I live will I praise thee for these Wonders thou hast done for the Children of Men, as long as I have any Being I will shew forth thy noble Acts.

I bless thee for the Advantages of thy divine Revelations, that thou hast not abandon'd me to the dim light of my own Reason, but hast given me thy holy Scriptures to instruct me in what is necessary for me to believe and practise, in order to my eternal Salvation.

I praise thee for delivering me from Temptations too strong for me, and for supporting me under many;

For the Assistance and Direction, and Comforts of thy Holy Spirit, for thy preventing and restraining Grace;

H

For

158 DEVOTIONS for

For subduing my Understanding and Affections to the Obedience of Faith and Godliness;

For inspiring me with good Thoughts, and kindling pious Desires in my Soul, and for assisting me in all the Methods of procuring eternal Happiness.

For these and all other thy Mercies and Favours, which are more than can be numbred; Blessing and Honour, Thanksgiving, and Praise, be given unto thee, O most adorable Deity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by me and by all Angels, by all Men and by all Creatures, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

When all have communicated, and the Priest returns to the remaining part of the Communion-Office, we must be sure to accompany him with our devoutest Affections, and repeat after him all the Petitions of that perfect Form of Prayer our Saviour has left us to help our Infirmities, which is most properly.

properly used in this Place; that his comprehensive Words may prevail for our Acceptance, provided they are attended with the sincere and earnest Desires of our Hearts.

The Prayer and Praise that follow do with great Propriety conclude this holy Action in imitation of our Saviour's Pattern, who concluded this his holy Institution both with a Prayer

John 17.

Matt. 26. 30.

and a Hymn, and therefore ought to be offered with particular Intensity and Application of Thought, that we may make some Amends for any Distractions or Wanderings that may have overtaken us in the former part of the Service.

The Blessing that only remains, which is pronounced by the Bishop if present, as the Priest of greatest Dignity, must be received in an humble Posture, and with silent Devotion, begging of God that it may be effectual for our future Conduct in all the Circumstances of holy Obedience.

260 DEVOTIONS *for*

A short PRAYER when the Communion Service is ended.

Pardon, O God, all those Imperfections that have accompanied me at this time in my Attendance at thy Altar; forgive the Deadness and Dulness of my Affections, the Wandrings of my Thoughts, and the Distractions of my Mind.

Let the Sincerity of my holy Purposes and Resolutions make some Amends for my Weakness and Frailty.

O! let this Commemoration of my crucified Saviour influence all my Thoughts, Words and Actions, that my Conversation may be as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

Reward me not according to my Deserts, but according to my great Necessities, and thy own rich Mercy in Jesus Christ, to whom with thee, O God the Father, and God, the

the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, World without end. *Amen.*

Where Communions are large, we may want some Exercises for the employing our devout Affections; and the Office for the *Administration* of the *Holy Communion*, contains such a variety of excellent Matter for Meditation, that it may not be improper to entertain our Minds, while others are receiving, with the Consideration of some particular Parts of it. This may possibly be sometimes more useful than either these or any other Prayers: more especially to such as complain of coldness and dulness in their Devotions; for Meditation naturally tends to warm our Affections, and raise in our Minds a Spirit of Devotion.

For example, suppose I had determined to meditate on some part or parts of the Confession, which begins thus, *Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all Things, Judge of all Men.* Here I would stop and consider well the import of these Words; they contain Four of God's most comprehensive Titles. First he is here said to be

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Almighty; Secondly, The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; Thirdly, The Maker and Creator of all Things; Fourthly, The Judge of all Men. The Consideration of the First and Last will provoke us to Godly Sorrow, and the Second and Third will excite our Hope in his Mercy. So that from hence we may take Occasion to exercise Acts of Sorrow and Humiliation, of Hope and Love, &c. thus; *I consider, O my God, that I have offended thee, who art Almighty, and therefore able to punish; but I consider too, that thou art the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore I cannot doubt of thy Love to me, and of thy readiness to forgive me who repent and turn to thee.* Such Ejaculations might be formed from each of these particulars, or from any other Branches of the Communion Office; but because all People are not able to form such Acts, I have taken the Liberty of adding several Acts of the most considerable Vertues of a Christian Life; for no Moments of this holy Season should be lost, all these precious Minutes should be husbanded to the greatest Advantage, for they will have amighty Influence upon our whole Lives.

Lives, and by being frequently repeated they will stock our Minds with variety of good Thoughts, which may prove admirable Helps all the remaining part of our Days. If we have not time for this spiritual Improvement in the Church, it will be very proper to make use of them in our *Closets*; for Days set apart for the publick Worship of God, should have a larger share of our private Devotions, and then the Sense of Religion will stick closer to our Minds, when we mix again with the World, and return to our secular Employments.

Acts of FAITH.

I Believe, O God, that thou art an eternal incomprehensible Spirit, infinite in all Perfections, who didst make all things out of nothing, and dost govern them all by thy wise Providence.

Let me always adore thee with profound Humility, as my Sovereign

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reign Lord ; and help me to love and praise thee with Godlike Affections, and suitable Devotion.

I believe, O God, that in the Unity of thy Godhead there is a Trinity of Persons ; that thou art perfectly One, and perfectly Three ; One Essence, and Three Persons : The depth of this Myſtery I cannot comprehend, but I firmly believe it, becauſe thou haſt revealed it in thy Holy Word, who art infinite Truth ; and I will praise and adore the Holy Trinity, to whoſe Service I was religiously dedicated in Baptiſm, as the joint-Authors of my Salvation.

I believe, O Bleſſed Jeſus, that thou art of one Subſtance with the Father, the very and Eternal God ; that thou didſt take upon thee our frail Nature ; that thou didſt truly ſuffer, and wert crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile us to thy Father, and to be a Sacrifice for Sin.

I believe, O Almighty Love, that
accor-

according to the Types and Prophecies which went before of thee, and according to thy own infallible Prediction, thou didst by thy own Power rise from the Dead the third Day, that thou didst ascend into Heaven, that there thou sittest on thy Throne of Glory, adored by Angels, and interceding for Sinners.

I believe, O Lord, that thou hast instituted and ordained holy Mysteries as Pledges of thy Love, and for a continual Commemoration of thy Death that thou hast not only given thy self to die for me, but to be my Spiritual Food and Sustenance in that holy Sacrament to my great and endless Comfort; O! may I frequently approach thy Altars with Humility and Devotion! and work in me all those holy and heavenly Affections, which become the Remembrance of a crucified Saviour.

I believe, O Lord, that thou hast not abandon'd me to the dim Light

166 DEVOTIONS *for*

of my own Reason, to conduct me to Happiness; but that thou hast revealed in the holy Scriptures whatever is necessary for me to believe and practise, in order to my Eternal Salvation.

O Truth! Eternal Truth! I am entirely satisfied in believing thy holy Word, because it came from thee, who art infinitely Wise and Omniscient, and therefore canst not be deceived; who art infinitely Good, and therefore wilt not deceive thy Creatures.

O how Noble and Excellent are the Precepts! How Sublime and Enlightning the Truths! How Persuasive and strong the Motives! How Powerful the Assistances of that Holy Religion, in which thou hast instructed me! My delight shall be in thy Statutes, and I will not forget thy Word.

I believe, O blessed Master, it is my greatest Honour and Happiness to be thy Disciple; how miserable
and

and blind are those that live without God in the World, who despise the Light of thy Holy Faith! Make me ready to part with all the Enjoyments of Life, nay even Life it self, rather than forfeit this Jewel of great Price: Blessed are the Sufferings which are endured, happy is the Death which is undergone, for heavenly and immortal Truth!

I believe thou hast threatned everlasting and unconceivable Torments to those who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness, and who obey not the Gospel of Christ. O just Punishment of those who do not love thee!

But if I believe this fatal Doom, why am I not afraid of it? Why are the Evils of the Body so much thinned, and those of the Soul so little regarded? Why do I take so much pains to avoid the short and transitory Evils of this Life, and so little pains to avoid those which are Eternal?

I believe thou hast prepared, O
H 6 Lord,

168 DEVOTIONS *for*

Lord, for those that love thee, everlasting Mansions of Glory ; if I believe thee, O Eternal Happiness, why does any thing appear difficult that leads to thee? Why should I not willingly resist unto Blood to obtain thee? Why do the vain and empty Enjoyments of Life take such fast hold of me: O perishing Time! why dost thou thus bewitch and deceive me? O Blessed Eternity! when shalt thou be my Portion for ever?

Acts of HOPE.

O My God! in all my Dangers, Temporal and Spiritual, I will hope in thee ; who art Almighty Power, and therefore able to relieve me ; who art Infinite Goodness, and therefore ready and willing to assist me?

Greater is thy Mercy, O Blessed Jesus, than my Wickedness ; thy Goodness

Goodness exceeds the Number and
Heinousness of my Sins ; greater is
thy Power, O God, than the Fury
of my Enemies ; therefore when
my Fears press hardest upon me, I
will put my Trust and Confidence
in thee.

O precious Blood of my dear Re-
deemer ! O ~~gaping~~ Wounds of my
crucified Saviour ! Who can con-
template the Sufferings of God In-
carnate, and not raise his Hope, and
not put his trust in them ?

I firmly hope, O my God, for the
Pardon of all my Sins, which I
heartily bewail and detest ; I firmly
hope to obtain the Vertues and
Graces of thy Holy Spirit, which
I am resolved sincerely to endeavour
after ; I wait and expect thy Eternal
Glory, which shall always be the
aim of all my longing Desires.

What tho' my Body be crumbled
into Dust, and that Dust blown
over the Face of the Earth, yet I
undoubt-

170 DEVOTIONS *for*

undoubtedly know my Redeemer lives, and shall raise me up at the last Day.

Whether I am comforted, or left desolate; whether I enjoy Peace or am afflicted with Temptations; whether I am healthful or sickly, succoured or abandon'd by the good things of this Life; I will always hope in thee, O my chiefest Infinite Good.

Altho' the Fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vines; altho' the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Fields yield no Meat; although the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation.

What tho' I mourn and am afflicted here, and sigh under the Miseries of this World for a time, I am sure my Tears shall one Day be turned into Joy, and that Joy none shall take from me.

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I should too much injure thy Charity and thy Sufferings, O Bleſſed Jeſus, if I had not a firm hope of working out my Salvation.

Great is the Malice of the Powers of Darkneſs, and great is my own Weakneſs; but how much greater is thy Goodneſs and thy Might, O my gracious God! I will therefore work out my Salvation with Fear and Trembling; but as long as I live, I will hope in thy Mercy.

O miſerable wretch that I am! If I hope, why do not my Endeavours answer my Hopes? If I hope to obtain the Grace of God to overcome my Follies, and to acquire all neceſſary Vertues, why do I not labour to ſuch holy Purpoſes?

Whoever hopes for great things in this World, takes pains to attain them; how can my hopes of Everlaſting Life be well grounded, if I do not ſtrive and labour for that Eternal Inheritance.

I will

172 DEVOTIONS *for*

I will never refuse the meanest Labours, while I look to receive such glorious Wages; I will never repine at any temporal Loss while I expect to gain such Eternal Rewards.

Blessed Hope! be thou my chief Delight in Life, and then I shall be stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord: Be thou my Comfort and Support at the Hour of Death, and then I shall contentedly leave this World, as a Captive that is released from his Imprisonment.

Acts of LOVE.

ALmighty and Everlasting God, thou art Infinite in all Excellencies and Perfections, and therefore art the most proper Object of the Love and Adoration of Immortal Souls; Thou art infinite in Goodness and Loving-Kindness towards me, and therefore hast the justest claim to my Heart. O in-

the ALTAR. 173

O infinite Amiability! When shall I love thee without Bounds, without Coldness or Interruption, which, alas, so often seize me here below? Let me never suffer any Creature to be thy Rival, or to share my Heart with thee; Let me have no other God, no other Love, but only thee.

Whatever is amiable in the Creatures, is derived from thee; and is no farther amiable, than it bears some Impression of thy Amiability; their Goodness is imperfect, and mix'd with much Evil, but thou only art perfectly Excellent; O let the World never more have place in my Heart! All my Affections I withdraw from that, to fix on thee.

O dear Jesus, who didst love me to such a degree, that thou wert pleased for my sake to endure a painful and shameful Death; how is it possible I can live without loving thee?

O how

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O how much is it the Grief of my Heart, that my Love is so imperfect, so little fix'd upon the most deserving Object! O when shall I love thee to the utmost Capacity of a Creature, and praise thee to all Eternity!

How afflicting is it to me, not to love thee as much as I desire! Alas! when shall I love thee with all my Strength? When shall all carnal Affections die in me, and all things belonging to the Spirit live and grow in me? When shall I be willing to lay down my Life for thee, who hast shed thy precious Blood for me?

Grant, O God, that I may continually exercise upon Earth what the blessed Saints practise with so much fervour in Heaven; the Glories and Pleasures of that happy Region would be imperfect, if the Flame of Love did not continually burn before thee.

Whoever loves, desires to please the beloved Object; and according

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to the degree of Love is the greatness of Desire ; make me, O God, diligent and earnest in pleasing thee ; let me chearfully discharge the most painful and costly Duties ; and forsake Friends, Riches, Ease, and Life it self, rather than disobey thee.

Whoever loves, desires the Welfare and Happiness of the beloved Object : But thou, O dear Jesus, canst receive no Addition from my imperfect Services ; what shall I do to express my Affection towards thee ? I will relieve the Necessities of my poor Brethren, who are Members of thy Body ; for he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen ?

I will pray without ceasing, and seriously meditate upon thy Precepts ; I will hear thy Word with Reverence and Attention, and receive the holy Sacrament with Humility and Devotion ; for these are
the

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the Methods thou hast establish'd of
conversing with thee, of uniting us
to thee, and are the only means where-
by I can enjoy thee here below.

Alas! how is all my Time un-
profitable, my Labour lost, my Ac-
tions and Sufferings vain, when
they are not employed in thy Ser-
vice, when they are not endured for
the Love of thee my God?

I will long for thy appearing,
O Blessed Jesus, because it will
transform me into thy Likeness, be-
cause it will enter me into the full
Enjoyment of thee, and unite me to
thee for ever: The utmost Labour
of all my Days is little enough, the
Service of my whole Life short e-
nough, and no more than sufficient
to secure this Eternal Inheritance.

O Crucified Jesus, in whom I
live, and without whom I die! mor-
tifie in me all sensual Desires, en-
flame my Heart with thy holy Love,
that I may no longer esteem the Va-

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nities of this World, but place my Affections entirely on thee.

Let my last Breath, when my Soul shall leave my Body, breathe forth Love to thee, my God; I enter'd into Life without acknowledging thee, let me therefore finish it in loving thee; O let the last Act of Life be Love!

*Acts of Conformity to the Will
of GOD.*

Blessed Will of God! how just and upright art thou in all thy Determinations? How good and amiable in all thy Dispensations? they only love thee not, who know thee not, and they who know thee not, how miserable are they?

What art thou, O Lord? and what am I? Thou art all Wisdom, I am all Blindness and Ignorance: Chuse thou for me, let thy holy Will be done in me and by me, be-

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cause if I shou'd chuse and will for my self, all would be Vanity, Rashness and Folly,

Thou art a God infinite in Mercy and Loving-kindness, therefore wilt order all things to my greatest Advantage. Wo to me! when my Will is not obedient and resigned to thy Blessed Will in every thing.

O my God, thou canst will nothing but that which is truly good, and I am capable of willing every thing that is monstrously evil; I therefore renounce my own Will, I submit to be intirely governed by thine.

The Designs of thy Mercy are to make me happy to all Eternity, and my perverse Inclinations run after present Pleasures, how contrary soever they may be to thy gracious Purposes. It is therefore reasonable, O Lord, that I should distrust my own Guidance, and that thy blessed Will should direct all my Ways.

Holiness is the Path my God hath chalked out to everlasting Bliss; may thy holy Will be accomplished in me, and then I shall be sanctified by thy Grace in this World, and glorified in the Enjoyment of thy self in the next.

Thy Will, O Blessed Jesus, is that I should avoid all Sin, and purifie my self as thou art pure; my own will does but too often prevail upon me to transgress thy holy Laws, which therefore I detest and abhor. Thy Will shall be my Rule, because it makes me do every thing that is good.

How true is it, O my Jesus, that thou art my Lord and Master, my Omnipotent Sovereign? How fit and reasonable therefore is it, that thy Will in every thing should be my Choice and Satisfaction?

Consider well, O my Soul, that upon two Wills depends either thy Happiness or thy Misery upon the
Will

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Will of God, thy Happiness; upon thy own Will, thy Misery: Consider well to which thou chusest to unite thy self, because eternal Happiness and eternal Misery are of too great Importance to be neglected.

'Tis easie, O Lord, to submit to thy Will, when it is pleasing and agreeable to our Natures; but certainly it is no less our Duty when thou thinkest fit to try us with Difficulties, and to contradict the Inclinations of Flesh and Blood.

In all thy Sufferings, in thy painful Crucifixion and shameful Death, O my dear Jesus, thou didst entirely resign thy self to the Will of thy Father. Shall I murmur against less Sufferings, which I have so much deserved? Shall I not quietly and patiently submit to them?

If I do not love thee, O my God, more than my self, I am not worthy of thee; If I do not prefer thy Will to my own, it is much to be feared

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I do not love thee; Oh my God, I will deny my self to be made perfect in Love.

Thy Will, O God, is thy blessed self; they therefore, who refuse to follow thy Will, declare that thou shalt not reign over them, that they desire not the knowledge of thy Ways. It is thee I desire, O my God, I renounce my own Will therefore to follow thine.

*Acts of VIRTUE in relation to
the Passion of our Saviour.*

WHither has Love carried thee, O Blessed Jesus? even to the painful and shameful Death of the Cross for my sake. O how imperfect is my Love, if Afflictions or Crosses are able to separate me from thee? or if I am not willing to endure the greatest Torments rather than forsake thee?

I

Thou

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Thou wert, O Jesus, so in Love with Sufferings for me, that rather than come down from the Cross, thou didst chuse to expire upon it. Miserable wretch that I am! How does my Flesh and Blood start at the very Appearance of a violent Death, tho' it might be necessary as a Testimony of the Truth of my Affection towards thee!

Thy sacred Head was crowned with Thorns, and all thy Body plowed with Scourges, but my Sins and Follies added Sharpness to them, and pierced thee and wounded thee more, than the Thorns and Scourges themselves. O! I grieve and love, when I consider my Iniquities drew upon thee all thy Sorrows; those exquisite Pains and Torments in thy Body! those inexpressible Fears and Anguish in thy Soul!

I do for ever, O Lord, detest and abjure those Sins that were thy Tormentors, I will persecute those vile
Lusts

Lusts and Affections that crucified thee, I will fly from all Appearance of Evil.

Is it possible not to love thee, O Blessed Saviour, above all things, who hast delivered me from such imperious Masters? Is it possible to remember that my Sins occasioned all thy Grief, and ever to Offend thee more?

What does my Soul long for? What is the Desire of my Heart? Is it possible that empty frail Creatures only should rejoice and delight it, when divine Love displays it self in the bleeding Wounds of the suffering Jesus?

Let the Fire of Divine Love burn bright in my Soul, never will I search for any other Fewel to nourish this holy Flame, than thy Scourges and thy Thorns, than thy Reed and thy Cross!

Thy whole Life was spent in doing good, and so far from indul-

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ging the Pleasures of Sense, that thou hadst not where to lay thy Head; and whoever frequents the Christian Sacrifice, must be convinced at what a rate thou didst value the Welfare of Mankind; for thou didst willingly embrace all sorts of Sufferings in order to accomplish it.

What Folly and Rashness is it therefore for me to be always caressing my self with sensual Enjoyments, to be spending my Estate in Jollity, in Splendor, in Folly and Luxury, which ought to be employed in doing good to the Souls and Bodies of Men! How unlike is this to that Example thou hast set before me, and to that Disposition of Mind thou requirest of me?

Alas! Suffering can only affright those that consider themselves, and not thee; that love themselves, and not thee, O my crucified Jesus. Thou

Thou wert made perfect thro' Sufferings, and can I behold and love such a blessed Pattern, and not desire to suffer with thee, and to die for thee?

Who can Fathom this Abyfs of Divine Love? I am the Criminal, and thou, O Blessed Jesus, art crucified: What ought I not to have suffered, to have gained an Interest in thee? And yet what hast thou not suffered to purchase such a Wretch as I am?

I have offended thee, and thou reconcilest me with thy own Blood? I occasioned thy Death, and thou givest me Life: Was there ever any Love like that Love which my Lord and my God has shewed towards me?

When I consider thee, O dear Jesus, what thou art in thy self, and what thou art to me, I feel my self constrained to love thee. Where shall I discover greater Excellencies

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and Perfections to raise my Admiration? Where shall I find greater Bounty and Goodness to engage my Affections?

Acts of HUMILITY.

O My God! Thou art the eternal Source of all Excellency and Perfection; and I, miserable Wretch! what am I? Nothing but poor Dust and Ashes, Folly and Vanity. It is reasonable therefore I should obey thee, because thou art infinitely above me; that I should submit to thee in all things, without grudging, without murmuring, because thou art infinite Wisdom.

Blessed Humility! When shall I possess thee? When shall I enjoy that Tranquillity of Mind, which is only found among those that love and obey thee? When shall I be adorned with that Comeliness and Beauty, which thou only canst bestow?

What

What have I, O Lord, whereof to glory ? If of my Body, it is nothing but vile Clay, moulded by thy Omnipotent Hand, and must return to Rottenness, and be the Food of Worms ; If of my Mind, it is the Breath of Life infused by thee, and by my own Folly made full of Sin and Wickedness. I have gone astray from the Womb, and in Sin did my Mother conceive me.

All the Good I possess comes from thee ; if my outward Man has any Advantages above others, it is the effect of thy Bounty ; from whence proceeds Health and Strength, Beauty and Comeliness, and upon thy Will they depend, to be recalled at a Moment ; If my Mind has the least Excellency it is thy Gift, who didst endue me with Reason and Grace : All that is my own, is the abuse of thy Favours ; and whatever is bad in me, is properly mine.

I am unworthy, O Lord, of all
I 4 thy

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thy Gifts, by Reason of my Vileness and Ingratitude; I do not deserve the Air I breathe in, because I have infected it as it were with noisome Lusts; I do not deserve the Bread I eat, because my Table has become a Snare, and the good Creatures thou hast given me for Refreshment have been abused to Luxury and Sensuality.

O let me consider what I am by Nature, frail and Weak; what I am by Sin, odious and contemptible in thy sight: and let this Knowledge of my Self suppress and mortifie all proud and vain Thoughts; let a Sense of my own Vileness and Unworthiness humble my self as it were in Dust and Ashes.

It is the sincere desire of my Soul, O blessed Jesus! It is the firm choice of my Will to be rather a Door-keeper in the House of my God, than to dwell in the Tents of Wickedness.

I will not place my Pleasure and Satisfaction

Satisfaction in the Praise of Men, because it is an uncertain Breath of Air, apt to swell me with Pride and Vanity, and is the Effect of Civility and Charity, rather than of what I deserve. I will, in all my Actions, endeavour to please thee, tho' it be attended with Ignominy and Reproach, and tho' I thereby become the Contempt of the Scornful.

O let me bear the Injuries and Affronts of bad Men with Patience and Meekness, because I have deserved much worse Treatment from thee. Let me receive the Reproofs and Admonitions of good Men with Thankfulness, because I stand so much in need of them, and that they are so proper to correct my Follies.

O let me never insult over the Follies and Sins of my Fellow Christians, because I am liable to the same Temptations; Let me pity and compassionate their Misfortunes, because if I am not plung'd in the

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same Gulph of Misery, it is wholly owing to thy Grace which has preserv'd me, to thy Almighty Hand which has held me up.

How didst thou condescend, O dear Jesus, to be born in a Stable, to lead a Life destitute of all Comforts and Accommodations, to die upon a Cross, and all this for the good of thy sinful Creatures, and shall I think any Labour too grievous, any Office too mean, whereby I may be able to promote the Temporal and Eternal Happiness of my Neighbour?

Without thee, O Jesus, I can do nothing! Inspire me with that Humility which thou hast taught by thy Precepts, and by thy own Example; I will endeavour to imitate thy state of Humiliation here upon Earth, that I may partake of those Glories thou now dost possess at the right Hand of thy Father.

Acts of CONTRITION.

O Most gracious God, who art the inexhaustible Fountain of all Goodness: who art only amiable; how grievously have I offended thee? What return have I made for those Graces and Favours, which thou hast bestowed upon me? What tribute have I paid to thine infinite Perfections? I will declare my Iniquity, and be sorry for my Sins.

I will repent, O my God, of my Sins as the greatest of Evils; and the remembrance of them shall be more grievous and afflicting to me, than that of any other Evil whatsoever; for they are the Offences of a vile Creature against thee, the Great Creator, the chiefest and most desirable Good; wherefore I abhor my self and repent in Dust and Ashes.

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I can plead nothing, O Lord, to extenuate the Guilt of my Sins; I ought to have renounced every thing that is valuable in Life, nay even Life it self, rather than to have offended thee, whose loving Kindness is better than Life: But I do now most heartily detest my Sins, because they are displeasing to thee, who art Infinite Goodness, and I purpose by the help of thy Grace to live better for the time to come.

Thou hast graciously declared, O my chiefest Good, that a broken Spirit is a Sacrifice acceptable to thee; that thou wilt not despise a broken and a contrite Heart. O my Heart, let Grief and Sorrow rend thee in Pieces, who hast hitherto Sacrificed thy self to a vain and wicked World.

If the Sorrow of this Vale of Tears could enter into the State of the Blessed, even in Heaven I would lament the Offences committed against

gainst the great Lord of Heaven and Earth. But whilst I am here below I will turn unto thee, O Lord, with Weeping and Mourning, and I will chuse the greatest Sufferings rather than offend thee.

I love thee, O my God, and how much is it the Grief of my Soul that I have not always loved thee? that I have not always had a regard to thy divine Precepts? Oh that my Head were Waters, and my Eyes a Fountain of Tears, that I might weep much, and love much, having much to be forgiven.

As my Love increases towards thee, O dear Jesus, so much the more do I grieve for my Sins, which made thee a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with Grief. And I am so much the more resolved by the help of thy Grace to abstain from all Evil for the time to come; by how much the more I rejoice in every thing that tends to thy Honour and Glory.

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Oh! For what empty Shadows, have I forfeited the Favour of the most High? For what trifling Vanities have I incurred the displeasure of my best Benefactor. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned against Heaven and in thy Sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy Son: But I return with the Prodigal; O let thy Paternal Bowels yearn on me, and graciously receive me.

How can I behold thee, O Infinite Goodness and not love thee? How can I love thee and not grieve for having offended thee? And not detest my Sins, and not resolve to forsake them? Oh! may I always sincerely love thee, and then I shall always renounce and abhor every thing that is Evil.

The Torments of the damned are justly the Objects of my Fear; and when I consider that they are Eternal, I tremble, O Lord, at thy just
and

and Omnipotent Wrath provoked by my heinous Transgressions. But, Oh! let the Sense of having offended infinite Goodness be more grievous and afflicting to me, than that of any other Evil whatsoever.

Blessed Jesus! Hast thou not redeemed me from many and great Evils? Hast thou not heaped upon me abundant Testimonies of thy goodness and loving kindness? And yet have not mine Iniquities increased over my Head and my Trespases grown unto the Heavens? But I will break off my Sins by Righteousness, and mine Iniquities by shewing Mercy to the Poor.

Oh! My God, I will lie down in shame, and Confusion shall cover me. The Measure of my Sorrow, shall bear some Proportion to the heinousness of my Sins. I will keep under my Body and bring it into Subjection. I will avoid all fresh Occasions of backsliding. I will obey

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bey thee in all things, and suffer with Patience, whatever Punishment thou shalt think fit to inflict upon me: Happy, infinitely happy! if upon any terms I can procure thy Love and Favour.

O Heavenly Father, for thine own infinite Mercies Sake, for thy Truth and Promise Sake, for all the Merits and Sufferings of the Son of thy Love, in whom thou art always well pleased, pardon all my Sins and Failings, and receive me into thy Favour. *Amen, O Lord God, Amen, Amen.*

Acts of PRAISE.

PRaise the Lord, O my Soul, for it is a good thing to sing Praises unto our God, O sing Praises unto his Name, for it is Lovely. Thy Name, O Lord, endureth for ever, so doth thy Memorial, O Lord, from one Generation to another. As long as I live, I will praise the Lord,

Lord, as long as I have any Being
I will sing Praises unto my God.

To thee, O Lord, belongeth
Greatness, and Power, and Glory,
and Victory, and Majesty: For all
that is in the Heaven and in the Earth
is thine, thine is the Kingdom, O
Lord, and thou art exalted as Head
above all. Blessed and Praised be
thy Holy Name, O Lord God, for
ever and for ever.

Thou art the Everlasting and E-
ternal King, before the Mountains
were brought forth or ever thou
had'st formed the Earth and the
World, from everlasting to everlast-
ing, thou art God, I will trust in
the Lord for ever, for in the Lord,
Jehovah is everlasting Strength.

Thou art, O Lord the same, yester-
day, to day, and for ever, and thy
Years fail not. Thy Goodness, thy
Power, thy Wisdom, and thy right-
eousness endure for ever, with thee
is no Variableness nor Shadow of
turning

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turning. The Council of the Lord standeth for ever, and the Thoughts of his Heart to all Generations. The wicked therefore must feel the Power of thy Wrath, the weight of thy Almighty Arm, and thou wilt give Grace and Glory, and withhold no good thing from them that live a godly Life.

Praised be thy Being which knows no Bounds or Limits, but doth spread and diffuse it self every way, beyond the Capacity of our shallow Imagination. The darkest Corners and the most private Recesses cannot exclude thy Presence. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or **whither** shall I flee from thy Presence? Can any hide himself in Secret that thou shalt not see him, who fillest Heaven and Earth?

Thou art an Almighty God, is any thing too hard for thee? The Lord of Hosts hath purposed it, who shall disannul it? Thou art able to
make

make good all thy Promises and none can stay thy Hand. Thou canst inflict the greatest Punishments upon the wicked, and none can withstand thy Power. Who can resist the Destruction which the Lord sends? They only are secure of a safe Refuge, who abide under the Shadow of the Almighty.

Praised be the Lord, who only searcheth the Hearts of all the Children of Men; there is not a Word in the Tongue, but thou knowest it altogether, thine Eyes are upon the ways of Man, and thou seest all his goings. There is no darkness where the Workers of Iniquity can hide themselves. Let all the Earth Love and Fear thee, for thou knowest, and canst reward their Services. Let the Faithful call upon thee in all their Streights, for thy Ear is open to their Cry. And let every one prepare for that dreadful Tribunal where every Thought shall be brought

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brought into Judgment. God is greater than our Hearts and knoweth all things.

Oh! Lord, how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all; thou hast framed all things in Number, Weight, and Measure, and governest them with the best Order and greatest Harmony. Thou chusest what is best for us, and prescribest the best means for the advancement of our Happiness. But that Wisdom can never be sufficiently praised, which is manifested in the stupendous Mystery of Man's Redemption, where all the Divine Attributes shined with the greatest Lustre. Which to them that perish is foolishness, but to them that are saved the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God. Happy is the Man that findeth this Wisdom, that getteth this Understanding.

Praised be thy Name who keepest Truth for ever, who wilt not suffer

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fer thy faithfulness to fail, nor alter the thing that is gone out of thy Mouth. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but thy Words shall not pass away till all things be fulfilled. Thou art a God of Truth without Iniquity and Deceit; no deceitful Person shall rest upon thy Holy Hill, he that telleth lies shall not tarry in thy sight.

The Lord is righteous in all his Ways, and Holy in all his Works. He will not clear the Guilty, nor respect the Persons of Men, but rewardeth every Man according to his Work. Tribulation and Anguish shall be the Portion of every Soul that loveth Evil; but Glory, Honour, and Peace, shall be to every Man that worketh Good.

Thou art a Holy God, and of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity, and hast no pleasure in Wickedness. It is contrary to the Purity of thy Nature, to the Perfection of thy
Laws,

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Laws, and to those Pleasures which are at thy right hand for evermore. Let us therefore put on the New Man, which after God is created in Righteousness and true Holiness; let us purifie our selves as God is pure, for without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord.

Praised be the Lord, for his great Goodness which is extended to all his Creatures, and for the Wonders which he doth for the Children of Men. Whatever appears good in the best of thy Creatures is derived from thee, the Earth is full of thy Goodness, and nothing is hid from the Influence of it. Thou loadest us with thy Blessings, that thou mayest engage us to returns of Love and Gratitude; and if we are bound in Fetters and held in the Cords of Afflictions, it is that we may see our Transgressions and turn from our Iniquities, and still thou waitest to be gracious. Oh! that Men
would

would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and declare the Wonders that he doth for the Children of Men.

A PRAYER which may be used at any time in the Week before the Sunday or Holy-day on which we design to communicate, and which may properly be annex'd to our Morning Devotions at such times.

MOST Gracious and Merciful God, who hast by thy Minister given me an invitation to thy Heavenly Feast, grant me Grace to approach thy holy Mysteries with penitential Preparation, and with a Heart fully disposed to serve and obey thee all the Days of my Life.

Enable me, O my God, I most humbly beseech thee, to *examine* the state of my own Mind, to com-
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pare my Actions with the Rule of thy Laws, that nothing contrary to thy holy Will may ever find a settled Abode in my Soul; thou knowest all that Load of Impiety and Guilt under which I lie, help me therefore so impartially to judge and condemn my self, so humbly to repent and beg Pardon, that I may not be condemned at thy dreadful Tribunal: But alas! after the most strict Examination we can make, who can number his Impieties? who can tell how oft he offendeth? Cleanse me therefore, O Lord, from my secret Faults, which in general I renounce and bewail.

O my God, who alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men, be pleased to change my Heart into an intire Love of thee, that I may be unfeignedly sorry for having offended thee, who art infinite Goodness; that with a broken and Contrite Heart I may
grieve

grieve and mourn, and *repent* for all my *former Sins*, and may for ever forsake them, and for the future *stedfastly purpose to lead a new Life*, that I may renew my Baptismal Vow, and hereafter live as asworn Votary to thy Love,

O Heavenly Father, settle in my Soul *a lively Faith in thy Mercy thro' Christ*, a stedfast Belief of all thy Love to Sinners, and an affectionate Reliance on the Merits and Mediation of thy crucified Son; of my being accepted in the Beloved, for whom I will ever adore and praise thee.

O my crucified God, thou Sovereign Inflammatory of Love, let the *remembrance of thy Death* set all the Powers of my Soul on work, that I may desire and pant after thee, that I may admire and adore thee, that I may take heavenly Delight in thy gracious Presence, that with Praise and Thanksgiving I may re-
K ceive

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ceive thee into my Heart, and always entertain thee with pious Dispositions, and devout Affections.

I see, O Blessed Jesus, in the Memorial of thy Sufferings, how thou didst forgive me, and didst love me when I was thy Enemy; give me Grace to love my Neighbour, and to *be in Charity with all Men*; to forgive all my Enemies, and to be at Peace with all the World, as I desire to be loved, and forgiven, and to be at Peace with thee. All that have any way injured me I freely forgive for thy sake, O Lord; and if I have wronged or injured my Neighbour, give me Grace to beg his Pardon; and, as I have Opportunity, to make him Satisfaction and Restitution according to my Power. Whenever I see any of thy poor Members Hungry, or Naked, or in Distress, let the Remembrance of thy Love in dying for me engage me to contribute all I can to their

Relief; may they ever liberally partake of what I enjoy, since thou wert so liberal of thy inestimable Blood for me.

Thus prepared, O Lord, let me approach thy holy Table, and so eat the Flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and drink his Blood, that my sinful Body may be made clean by his Body, and my Soul wash'd thro' his most precious Blood, that I may evermore dwell in him, and he in me. *Amen.*

A PRAYER in our Retirement after we are returned home from the Lord's Table, which may be added to our Evening Devotions.

I Acknowledge, O Lord, my God! with all thankfulness of Heart, thy great Mercy and Goodness communicated to me this Day, in giving

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ving me an Opportunity of approaching thy holy Table, and in disposing my Mind to commemorate the infinite Love of my crucified Saviour, to render him Thanks and Praise for laying down his Life as a Sacrifice for the Sins of the World; and to represent unto thee that Sacrifice, as a full Satisfaction for them; whereby thou dost incline me humbly to hope for all the Benefits of his Death and Passion.

How many, O Lord, turn a deaf Ear to all the pressing Exhortations of thy Ministers; and being influenced by the Cares, and Riches, and Pleasures of Life, when they are invited, refuse to come? How many pious and devout Souls are deprived of the blessed Advantage of this highest and most solemn Act of Religion; and how many sincere and faithful Christians are oppressed with Scruples, dejected with Fears, so
that

that they dare not venture to partake of the holy Myſteries?

What Thanks therefore, moſt gracious God, can I return unto thy divine Majeſty, for impreſſing a Senſe of my Duty upon my Mind, and for that Strength and Power whereby thou haſt in ſome Meaſure enabled me to perform it. I will praife and magnifie thy great and glorious Name, and I will entirely devote my ſelf to thy Service as long as I have any Being.

Bleſſed be thy Name for thoſe freſh Supplies of Grace I have received at thy Altar, grant that they may make me run the way of thy Commandments with Delight and Pleaſure; that I may never any more faint or droop, or tire in my Duty.

Bleſſed be thy Name for thoſe comfortable Affurances thou haſt given me of Pardon and Forgiveness. Let this thy compaſſionate Goodneſs

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be a perpetual Obligation to Love and Gratitude. Let it put me upon my Guard, that I may watch over all my ways, and do always that which is well pleasing in thy sight.

Blessed be thy Name for that Peace and Quiet thou hast restored to my Soul; for those Resolutions thou hast wrought in me to persevere in thy Service to the end of my Days; make them firm, vigorous, and constant, and let never any sinful Passions any more ruffle and discompose my Mind.

Blessed be thy Name for that Relish thou hast given me of spiritual Delights; that Desire of possessing the eternal Inheritance; let the Enjoyments of Sense appear mean and contemptible, and let not the Pleasures of the World any more prevail upon me to transgress thy holy Laws.

Grant,

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Grant, O Lord, that I may walk worthy of these thy distinguishing Mercies, and live as becomes the Redeemed of the Lord. Without thee, O Blessed Jesus, I can do nothing; without thee who art the Sun of Righteousness I shall walk in Darkness; without thee who art the Physician of Souls I shall languish and die; without thee who art the Joy of all devout Minds I shall consume my Days away in Sadness. Remain therefore, O Lord, and abide with me for ever, I shall then be enabled to do thy Will in this Life, and thereby be qualified to partake of thy Glories to all Eternity in the next. *Amen, Amen.*

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Since it is possible this little Treatise may fall into Hands that may be destitute of helps for Family Devotion, I have added a Morning and Evening Prayer for such Occasions.

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O Eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all Mankind, Giver of all spiritual Grace, the Author of everlasting Life; we thine unworthy Servants entirely desire to praise thy Name for all the Expressions of thy Bounty towards us. We give thee Thanks that thou hast preserved us from many and great Dangers wherewith we have been encompassed, that thou hast brought us safe to the Light of this Day, and that thou hast refreshed us the past Night with quiet Rest and Sleep: But above all, blessed be thy Love that gave thy Son

to

to die for our Sins, to put us in a Way of being happy, if we would obey thee. And after all our wilful Refusals of thy Grace still hath Patience with us, and hast added this one Day more to all we have mispent already, to see if we will finish the Work thou hast set us to do, and fit our selves for eternal Glory.

Pardon, good Lord, all our former Sins, and all our abuses of thy Forbearance and Long-suffering, for which we are now sorry at our Hearts; give us Grace to lead more holy Lives, and to be more careful in improving all future Opportunities: Make thy self present to our Minds, and let thy Love and thy Fear rule in our Souls in all those Places and Companies, where our Occasions shall lead us this Day.

Keep us chaste in all our Thoughts,
temperate in all our Enjoyments,
humble in all our Opinions of our
K 5 selves,

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ſelves, charitable in all our Speeches of others, meek and peaceable under all Provocations, ſincere and faithful in all our Profeſſions, and ſo juſt and upright in all our Dealings, that no Neceſſity may force, nor Opportunity in any kind allure us to defraud or go beyond our Neighbours. When thou beſtoweſt Good on others, let us not envy but rejoice in it, and when thou addeſt any to our ſelves, let us own thy Mercy and humbly thank thee for it.

Afford us convenient Supplies in all our reaſonable Neceſſities, and protect us againſt the Approach of all Dangers: Make us diligent in all our Affairs, and give ſuch Succeſs to all our lawful Endeavours, as thou ſeeſt moſt expedient for us; teach us contentedly to ſubmit and not to repine at any thing that happens by the Allotment of thy wiſe Providence.

In

In all our passage through this World and our manifold Concerns in it, suffer not our Hearts to be too much set upon it; but always fix our Eyes upon the blessed hope, that as we go along we may make all the things of this World minister to it, and be careful above all things to fit our Souls for that pure and perfect Bliss, which thou hast prepared for all that love and fear thee, in the Glories of thy Kingdom.

Give thy Grace, most merciful God, to all the World, and let all who are redeemed by the Blood of thy Son, acknowledge thee to be the Lord, and become his Worshippers and faithful Servants. Make all Christians conscientious Practisers of that Holiness they profess; and above all inspire them with uniting Principles and charitable Hearts, that by their loving one another, as thou hast loved us, all the World may know they are thy Disciples.

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Let all Governours rule with Wisdom and Justice, and Subjects obey with Love and Chearfulness. Let the Priests of the Lord be exemplary in their Lives, and discreet and diligent in their Labours, having a most compassionate Love of Souls ; and let the People be humble and tractable, most desirous to hearken and fully bent to follow wise Instructions. Relieve the afflicted and those that are in want, assist them contentedly to depend on thee. Raise Friends to the Widows and Fatherless, the Prisoners and Captives and all that groan under any Oppression. Give Repentance, Patience and Resignation to all that lie upon Beds of Sicknes, and ease when thou seest it convenient for them. Speak Peace to troubled Consciences by delivering them from their causeless Scruples, and by making them constant in the Practice of Holiness. Bless all our
Friends,

Friends, who are especially endeared to us by their Kindnesses, all our Relations according to the Flesh, all that particularly pray for us, or desire our Prayers. Teach us all to ask what thou approvest, and then grant us whatsoever is asked.

Prevent us in all our Actions, guard us against all Dangers, relieve us in all Streights, and grant that we may always make thee our Confidence, and take all things well that thou orderest for us; shorten our Sorrows, and deliver us from all our Sins, and fit us all for that eternal Kingdom which thou hast prepared for us, for Jesus's Sake, in whose holy Name and Words we farther pray unto thee.

Our Father, &c.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Love of God, the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us this Day and for evermore. *Amen.*

An Evening Prayer for a Family.

ALmighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all Men: We acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed by Thought, Word and Deed against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy Wrath and Indignation against us; we do earnestly repent, and are heartily sorry for these our Misdoings, and the Remembrance of them is grievous unto us.

Have Mercy upon us, O Lord, after thy great Goodness, according to the Multitude of thy Mercies do away our Offences; Wash us thoroughly from our Wickedness, and cleanse us from our Sins; create and make in us new and contrite Hearts, that we worthily lamenting our
past

past Follies, and acknowledging our Wretchedness, may obtain of thee, the God of all Mercy, perfect Remission and Forgiveness.

Grant us, O Lord, the Assistance of thy Holy Spirit, that for the time to come, we may think and do such things as be rightful; that we who cannot do any thing that is good without thee, may by thee be enabled to live according to thy Will; that thy Grace may always so prevent and follow us, as to make us continually to be given to all good Works. And thou, O God, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great Dangers, that by Reason of the Frailty of our Nature we cannot always stand upright; grant to us such Strength and Protection as may support us in all Dangers, and carry us thro' all Temptations.

Help us, O Lord, to withstand the Assaults of the Enemies of our Salvation,

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Salvation, the World, the Flesh and the Devil, and with pure Hearts and Minds to follow thee the only God. Graft in our Souls the Love of thy Name, increase in us true Religion, nourish us with all Goodness, and of thy great Mercy keep us in the same. And thou, O God, whose never failing Providence ordereth all things both in Heaven and Earth; put from us, we beseech thee, all hurtful things, and give us those things which are profitable for us: And since 'tis thou alone canst order the unruly Wills and Affections of sinful Men, grant that we may love the things which thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise, that so among the sundry and manifold Changes of the World, our Hearts may surely there be fix'd, where true Joys are to be found. Dispose us by all the Means of Grace we enjoy, to attain that everlasting Sal-
vation

vation thou hast promised ; that we may both perceive and know those things which we ought to do, and may have Grace and Power faithfully to fulfil the same.

Teach us, O Lord, so to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; and grant that neither the Splendour of any thing that is great, nor the Conceit of any thing that is good in us, may any way withdraw our Eyes from looking upon our selves as sinful Dust and Ashes, but that we may press forward towards the Prize of the high calling that is before us, with Faith and Patience, with Humility and Meekness, with Mortification and Self-denial, with Charity and constant Perseverance to the End; that so when we shall depart this Life we may Sleep in the Lord, and at the General Resurrection in the last Day may be found acceptable in thy Sight, and receive that
Blessing

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Blessing which thy beloved Son shall then confer upon all those that truly love and fear thee,

Charge thy holy Providence, O Lord, we humbly beseech thee, with us this Night, and by thy great Mercy defend us from all the Perils and Dangers of it. Keep us both outwardly in our Bodies, and inwardly in our Souls, that we may be defended from all Adversities that may happen to the Body, and from all evil Thoughts that may assault and hurt the Soul.

Extend thy Goodness, O Lord, to the whole Race of Mankind ; have Mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels and Hereticks ; take from them all Ignorance, hardness of Heart, and contempt of thy Word ; and so fetch them home to thy Flock, that they may be saved among the Remnant of the true *Israelites*. Grant unto all them that are admitted into the Fellowship of Christ's Religion,
that

that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their Profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same. Let thy continual Pity cleanse and defend thy Church, and because it cannot continue in Safety without thy Succour, preserve it evermore by thy Help and Goodness. Bless all our Governours both in Church and State, that in their several Stations they may be useful and serviceable to thy Glory and the publick Good. We make our humble Supplications to thee for all our Benefactors, Friends and Relations, and also for our very Enemies ; let thy Fatherly Hand be ever over them, let thy Holy Spirit be ever with them, and so lead them in the Knowledge and Obedience of thy Word, that in the end they may obtain everlasting Life. Look with an Eye of Pity and Compassion upon all those who are any ways afflicted in Mind, Body, or Estate ;
give

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give them Patience under all their Sufferings, and in thy due time a happy issue out of all their Afflictions.

And as we pray unto thee, O God, for our selves and others, so we desire to bless and praise thy holy Name for all thy Goodness and loving Kindness to us, and to all Men. We give thee hearty Thanks for the Preservation of us this Day past, and the rest of our Lives from innumerable Accidents and Dangers, for the Comforts and Conveniences as well as the Necessaries of Life. But above all, we laud and magnifie, and adore thy Goodness, in the Redemption of the World by the Death and Passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and Man; who did humble himself even to the Death upon the Cross, for us miserable Sinners, who lay in Darknes and in the Shadow of Death, that he might make us the Children of God, and exalt

us

us to everlasting Life. Teach us to express our Thankfulness by submitting our selves entirely to his holy Will and Pleasure, and by studying to serve him in true Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Life. Accept, O Lord of these our Prayers and Praises, in and thorough the Mediation of Jesus Christ our Blessed Saviour and Redeemer, who has taught us when, we pray, to say,

Our Father, &c.

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